

ENTERING ON LIFE.

ENTERING ON LIFE:

A Book for Young Men.

BY

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TENTH EDITION.

London:

HODDER AND STOUGHTON,

27, PATERNOSTER ROW.

MDCCCLXXXII.

15,395

Butler & Tanner.
The Selwood Printing Works,
Frome, and London.

Aug 2/86

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YOUTH.

SOME things God gives often: some, He gives only once. The Seasons return again and again, and the flowers change with the months, but youth comes twice to none. While we have it we think little of it, but we never cease to look back to it fondly when it is gone.

That we realise its value so poorly while we enjoy it rises from several causes. What we have for an hour or a day is prized in some degree rightly, but we are young for long years together. Then we judge of a thing only by contrast and comparison, and youth is all sunshine. It is only as it fades that the shadows come out and show us what we have lost. One hour of its spirits and health in later life would be priceless, because they are gone; but we spend years radiant with both, and don't know our happiness from never feeling the want of them. We even weary for a future, which we reach only to lament having done so. If the sun rose only once in the year we should know how to value the light; as it is, we don't think of it. In Lapland all the world flocks to see it again after a six months' eclipse: here, where it rises each day, it finds us asleep. Water in the desert; summer in

winter ; health in sickness ; youth in age ; want makes the worth.

There is a third cause, besides · we are so thoughtless. Our minds, like butterflies, light on many things, but rest on none. Familiarity dulls reflection, as light on water brightens the surface, but hides the depths. We get accustomed to things and never trouble ourselves more about them ; we use, enjoy, or look at, them, mechanically, and without a second thought. Like children, each moment engrosses us, and it is only by an effort we realize either the past or the future. A little quiet thinking is good for us all. Life, like the landscape, needs to be studied, to be realized in any completeness. It is only by dwelling on details that we slowly master the whole, and know either its faults or beauties aright. Half-an-hour's thought in youth would go far, if used to contrast it with other parts of the picture of life, to make it more sensible of its superlative happiness.

I wish to help such a fit of reflection, by setting the heart and head to think, by some hints and reminders, which are all that the case allows. I can only suggest what each must follow up, and enlarge, and vary, from his own experience. I can only scatter some seeds which each must water and quicken for himself, for to tell all, would be to live every one's separate life and write it in full.

Life, like the fountain of Ammon, overflows only at dawn and early morning. As it gets older it has still pleasures, but they are sober and staid, tinged

with a darker green or an autumn brown. Spring leaves have a tint we miss in July or October: their freshness and soft transparency pass; the brook sings as it runs; the river glides quietly, and the sea moans. Poets always paint the Gods young, and half of our heaven is in the thought of our youth returning. Everything young is happy; God gives all nature so many days' grace before its troubles begin. There is a universal morning gladness, before the heat of the day. We spend boyhood and youth in an enchanted world, with fountains of joy scattering rainbows. It is a delight simply to live in those years.* As we get older happiness gets daintier, and needs more and more catering, but in our spring-time it laughs and thrives on the poorest fare. Youth is the great alchemist—it and the light, that turns hill-tops to amethyst, and the rough earth to gold. It transfigures everything to its own brightness, and, like the sun, makes a pavilion of its own beams.

It is easy to understand how this comes. The HEALTH we have while we are young gives a charm to existence. The rosy cheek, the light step, the merry laugh, the buoyant energy, the unwearying strength, the Hope that sings over us in the air like Ariel, whatever the road, are all its gifts. We know that we

* Augustine calls youth "*flos ætatis*," the flower of our days; Cicero calls it "*bona ætas*," the blessed time; and Seneca, "*ætas optima*," the best of life. The Elizabethan writers often speak of "the primrose of our youth."

have a body only by the pleasure and pride it brings, doctors are an enigma, and pains and aches belong to another race. Health is to life what light is to the landscape, making even bleakness and barrenness beautiful.

The HOPE that alone is worthy the name belongs only to youth.

"Youth is a breeze, 'mid blossoms straying;
Where Hope clings feeding, like a bee." •

If it keep up at all in after years it flies low and heavily, not as it did in the clear morning skies. Men get incredulous, hard to rouse and easily daunted, but youth sees the bright side only, and commits itself at once. It has not been dulled by failures and disappointments of any weight, as yet, and is still chasing the rainbow. Imagination only slowly yields to sense and experience, and paints without shadows. It hates calculation, as a mark of faint-heartedness and senility. Prudence grows very slowly, and seldom flowers freely before manhood. Indeed, even then, it blossoms only in patches in any case: there are always some twigs or boughs bare to the last. To go into detail seems waste of time to the young man; he jumps to conclusions and reflects after he has acted. But his splendid sanguineness is, after all, the life of the world; without it, things would stagnate into a motionless Dead Sea. It is the living force of growth and progress, and is often wiser than caution. It

• Coleridge.

makes no account of odds, but neither does the soft grass that heaves up the flag-stones. It urges the student to his books, the apprentice in his trade, the clerk in his office, and takes a thousand shapes to suit every ambition. It lightens poverty, toil, danger, and self-denial, and kindles its day-star all the brighter for darkness round. Youth has always something worth while in view: it faces the sun, and the shadows fall behind, out of sight. It keeps climbing, sure that it sees the top. It is the true Greek fire that no waters can quench. It has a power all its own of summing up in its own favour. If a tithe of its dreams came true, genius would soon be almost a drug; poets be found in each street; great discoveries make each day an era; and fortunes leave no one poor. It looks on the world as it is, as a laggard which will not do much till it show it the way.

But youthful Hope could do nothing but dream, if it had not FRESH ENERGY at its command, ready for anything. The toil young men undergo, often for trifles which they themselves will laugh at, before long, is amazing. They work harder for pleasure, than older men do for gain. In their callings, if they take to them, they go through tasks which, in after years, will be their boast and wonder. It was when he was young that Hercules went through his Twelve Labours. The Student dismisses sleep and trims his lamp, poor foolish lad, till the morning, burning life and his oil together. The very writing he does would be work enough even for the mechanical weariness,

but when the mental industry he expends is added, it astounds us. It is the same in every pursuit: at sea, or on shore; in the warehouse or the workshop; in war and in peace; in the church and the world; youth bears the strain and carries the flag. Experience may counsel, but youth pulls the oar. It has the dash, the spirit, the vital force: the parts are lively, the senses fresh, and Ambition and Hope clamour, like unhooded hawks, for flight. It must do something, and the harder the better liked. Older men rest on their laurels, younger men have to gain them, and they will match themselves against anything that they may do so. Body and mind alike turn back from nothing. Youth feels as if it were immortal, and acts in keeping. And if, in the end, strength and spirits do seem, for a time, to fail, the fountain refills in a night's repose. Fatigue rises from sleep fresh as the morning. In those golden years, our powers, like the unwearying wings far out on the ocean, seem never to need or to know a rest.

The FREEDOM FROM CARE in youth is another spray in its garland. No one is ever really contented, or quite clear of something like trouble, but there is a great difference between the troubles of different ages. The boy wishes he were a youth; the youth, that he were a man: each thinking he has only to be like the other to be happy. But the man looks backward instead of forward: his golden age, like that of the Poets, lies in the past. The older we get the more fondly do we remember our childhood and youth.

We follow them as they leave us, as the shepherds the angels, fading away into Heaven. A young man knows when his work is done, but older men can't throw off care with their coat. A working man, or a youth on salary, leaves his business behind when his hours are up, and what remains is his own, with none of his master's fears or worries to distract him.* But the merchant has a double shadow behind him, that of care, and his own. Cares starve in the light soil of youth: it needs the responsibilities, temptations, and ambitions of manhood to fatten it before they spring rank. But they take a thousand forms as the years pass; they dash at the quiet light of home joys, like moths at lamps; they perch on the softest easy chair; they fly round gilded cornices, like bats, and by night they stuff the pillow with thorns, and glare in between the curtains. The merchant sighs for his clerk's light-heartedness, as much as the clerk for his master's position. Fresh cares come with every fresh gain, and they thrive on losses. Mere living breeds them. Cares for ourselves, cares for others, and cares from others; cares to invest, cares to meet debts, cares to avoid losses, cares to surmount them; cares of a new undertaking; cares of an old one: there is no end of them. Everything has its own, as there are mites for each forgotten jar in the pantry. They

* Elihu Burritt says that there is no time in life in which we have so much real leisure as when working for others. He thinks the apprentice or working man has more chances of improvement than those in any other positions.

come up in clouds on every side, like gnats in a swamp.

But what cares has youth? It may say it has them, and it may feel what it calls by the name, but they are like breath on a mirror, gone while you look at it, and only outside, or, like children's tears, are shaken off by a smile next minute. Its smooth face matches its spirits as the rough skin of men suits theirs. It has no headaches from business anxieties; no heartaches and bewilderments from its affairs; it has only to do with other men's bills and taxes, and it needs have no skeleton locked up in its cupboard. If it be discontented it is only because what he has never satisfies any one. With bright Health, and sunny Hope, and fresh Energy, and freedom from Care, to let him use and enjoy them, a young man is master of more, and more his own master, than he ever will be in after years.

There is a **GENEROUS WARMTH AND ARTLESS ENTHUSIASM** about youth, that mightily helps as well as adorns it. It has no faint-hearted doubtings about things or persons, but is whole-souled, either for a creed, a friend, or a pursuit. Faith dies into cold questioning after a time, or into still colder indifference. In middle life we have no such close friends as when we are young; early companions are dropped and forgotten, and we hardly make more than acquaintances in their place. The heart grows hard like the hand, and loses its sensibility. As to pursuits, a middle-aged man can seldom be said to pursue anything.

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He only follows at a serious citizen step, in some path opened when he was fresher. A young man is one with all the world ; an older man gets more and more isolated and reserved. Conflict with the world ; changes in others, by death, distance, or time ; changes in ourselves, in position, opinions ; the sedateness of years ; the occupation of mind by many ties and engagements ; and, above all, the evil that settles on all of us, like rust on steel, destroy our frankness and natural warmth. The affections gradually get dull and slow, like the body. We love a youth ; we respect a man ; and from the same causes : the youth loves, the man can only respect us. Ardour is known only when we are young. Men get cold, distrustful, selfish, prudent, grasping, as years grow, unless they fight hard to prevent it. The heat of the heart grows less, like that of the body ; the blood gets thinner and poorer alike in figure as in fact, and it runs sluggishly. In a young man the soul looks through the face, but the rough skin of an older man thickens and clouds into a mask. The child-likeness to the kingdom of Heaven lingers through opening manhood, as the colours on clouds fade only slowly as they drift away from the sun. Each age has its weakness and its strength, but there is often in youth, a truthful ingenuousness, a moral manhood, an unselfishness, and a glow, which are wanting in riper years. Idleness gets the better of some ; vice of others ; and, in still more, the cold air of the world throws their nobler nature into a frozen sleep. Not that youth has all the true worth that we

meet: there are snowy clouds on the blue all through the day, though the glory comes only in the morning and as the sun leaves. Young men are warmer, more zealous, more loveable and more loving, but there are thousands at any time, in whom principle has shone out the more steadily and brightly as the smoke and flame of mere feeling have passed. But it is principle less than nature; conscience rather than impulse: and we honour it the more from the contrast to the rule.

I have not yet named the highest endowment of youth—its RELIGIOUSNESS. Not that, at its best, it is all that God requires, for no age can dispense with His grace, or rise to its ideal, unless it have been “born from above.” But the heart is soft and tender in early life compared with what it becomes in later. Principle and reflection, under God, lead mature men to religion: but it is instinct in youth.* The excesses we often deplore in it are no proof to the contrary, for the soil that grows lusty weeds would bear as vigorous corn. There is more natural piety in youth than after. The soul, like the face, shines while we are young. It has a susceptibility for religious impressions that passes away as we grow older. There is much common, in nobler things, to both sexes in

* “But for the moral part, perhaps Youth will have the pre-eminence, as Age hath for the Politic. A certain Rabbin, upon the text, *Your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams*; inferreth that young men are admitted nearer to God than old; because vision is a clearer revelation than a dream.”—BACON’S *Essay “Of Youth and Age.”*

early life, and, notably, a delicate tenderness, which survives in the woman, but dies into coldness, in great part, in the man. The heart controls in youth; in manhood, the head takes the lead. The affections are, as yet, free for good or for evil, for, whatever their bias, the final choice is not yet determined. In manhood, habits of thought, and aversion from religion can be changed only at the most terrible cost of mental and spiritual struggle. The devil, once in possession, throws us down and tears us in leaving, and even then, "hardly departs." It is like rending rock instead of cleaving water; it is the bursting of a dam instead of the quiet course of a stream. In youth you get the start of the tares and thorns; in manhood they have struck root and are already springing. The leaf takes its colour while soft and tender. In spring the soft earth drinks in the light and the showers: later in the year it is baked and sodden. All that attracts us in a young man gives the greater predisposition towards religion: its qualities need only a right direction; its affections, their supreme object in God, rather than in man or the world. It is unnatural in the young not to be religiously disposed. Compared with what they become if their serious thoughts be neglected, they are "not far from the kingdom." It is only by an effort that conscience can be drowned while we are young men: when we are older it takes an effort to rouse it. God wrestles with us in the dawning of the day.

It is an irresistible proof of all this that the great

majority of religious persons become so in early life. To let that season pass without deciding for God is to lose the time specially fitted by Him for doing so, for though He will take us at any age, He seeks us in our prime, that our whole life may be blessed in His service. He likes the opening flower rather than one that is blown and fading. The sacrifices were all taken from the young of the flock or the herd. For what else but that they may find their true object in Him, and gain the glory and bliss of their doing so, has He given us our generous early love, our enthusiasm, our religious instincts? They are too noble to be lavished on anything less, and find their complement only in dedication to His service in their earliest prime. The soft tendrils of life,—they are made to cling to the Divine, and raise our whole being high into the shining light.

It needs only a moment's reflection to verify all I have said. The world, in all its affairs, is mainly what young men have made it. Manhood and age may often have taught, but it is youth that makes the disciples and spreads the doctrine. Age has its share of ideas as full and noble as that of youth, and often more nicely tempered, for reflection is the domain of the one, and action that of the other. The theories of the fathers are the starting point of the practice of the sons. As we get older we get conservative, but the young have no past, only a future. The initiative in act is with them, as a rule, and not seldom even in thought. Genius commonly wins its laurels in early

life.* In politics, art, science, and morals, older men stand by maxims adopted in youth; then perhaps ultra, but out of date since. The wave runs higher up the sands with each generation. In war and in peace, in common life and religion, it is youth by which things have been mainly shaped as they are.

A glance at facts tells a striking story. Alexander overthrew the Great King, and saved Europe from becoming Asiatic, in extreme youth; Bonaparte had conquered Italy at five-and-twenty; Don John of Austria won the battle of Lepanto, and saved Christendom from the Turk, at the same age; Cortes was only thirty when he conquered Mexico; Byron and Raffaele both died at thirty-seven; Gustavus Adolphus died at thirty-eight; Pitt and Bolingbroke were ministers almost before they were men; Grotius was in great practice at seventeen, and attorney-general when he was twenty-four;† Romulus founded Rome before he was twenty; Newton had completed many of his greatest discoveries, and laid the foundation of all, before he was twenty-five; Sir Philip Sydney died at thirty-two, Beaumont at thirty, Keats at twenty-five, and Shelley at twenty-nine. Captain Cook had won his way into notice in the royal navy by twenty-seven, though his youth had been passed in a coasting collier.

It has been the same in religion. Luther had won

* Ruskin says that the most beautiful works of art are all done in Youth.

† "Coningsby," 89.

Germany to the Reformation at thirty-five; Pascal wrote a great work at sixteen, and died at thirty-seven the greatest of Frenchmen; Whitefield and Wesley had begun the great revival of last century while still students at Oxford, and the former had stirred society in England before he was twenty-four; Melancthon was keenly defending Luther, and had gained the Greek chair at Wittemberg, when he was twenty-one; Calvin published his "Institutes" at twenty-six; Edward Irving was at his highest at thirty; Oberlin was the Apostle of the Ban de la Roche at twenty-seven; Ignatius Loyola was only thirty when he made his Pilgrimage, and wrote the "Spiritual Exercises." At this moment what would religion do without the zeal and labours of the young? They fill our Sunday Schools, work out our philanthropic endeavours, and are the strength of every movement. Without them, the tide would soon turn, and the progress of the world be stayed. Early vigour and warmth, consecrated to God, work miracles. Older men have their honoured work, and are no less needed than younger, but the living force that conquers the world for God is the fresh enthusiasm of opening life. Years may counsel, and stimulate, and provide the means, but the hard work must fall mainly on young strength and zeal. Once won to God, there is no hesitation or half-hearted service. Youth feels itself only a steward, and gives itself up with unshrinking devotion.

Thus alike in civil and religious affairs, youth has to play the great part in securing progress. When it

has passed it does not seem worth a man's while to begin a career; he may continue in one already begun, and rise in it indefinitely, but hardly much more. In youth we grow; in manhood, broaden. In thought, as much as in other activities, we work in youth, and use when past it. The books of most men advanced in life show age as much as themselves. From the time of our touching middle life we mostly live on the past. Curiosity and enthusiasm soon subside, and rest gains attractions as work loses them. We grow lazy, and discover that we can do with what we have learned already; or we give up the struggle, and let ourselves drift with the current we cannot oppose; or we have gained what we wished, and are inclined rather to take our ease than trouble ourselves. Ambition dies if kept fasting too long. Life seems to culminate about thirty with most. Byron, Lord Brougham, and Augustine fix it at that age, and Dante puts the "key of the arch" at thirty-five. But the moral is the same whichever we choose. Youth forges and prepares; riper life anneals and tempers. Youth is the spring, but maturity gives the balance. Embers glow with the brightest heat, but it needs fresh coals to renew and increase the flame.

But youth is not all strength. It has its weakness as well, and would not be human without it. We have a fatal taint which we can as little deny as explain. It comes like the hue of the skin or the shape of the limbs. Boyhood, indeed, is often both foolish and wicked even when followed by a beautiful

youth and manhood, and turns to what is cruel, or impure, or dishonest, as if by an instinct. As the man wakes, the moral nature shares in the manhood. But, at the best, there is no claiming perfection. It is always an effort to do right, and natural to do what we condemn. If we hurt no one else we hurt ourselves; waste our opportunities and powers; forget our duty, and are contented with a low standard of thought and action. We need wings to rise, and need to use them to keep up. There is room for the best to be better, and they can become so only through struggle and failure. The ideal seems to recede as we advance, and height to rise over height till we would fain rest rather than climb. Two natures wrestle in our breast, and at no age more fiercely than in our youth. As it is decided then, it, as a rule, continues, and light and darkness, Ormuzd and Ahriman, know it, and strive for the prize. Love seeks a victory to report in Heaven; sin, a slave to be at her will, for ever. Truth and Falsehood, Love and Hate, Heaven and Hell, the Devil and God, meet in the dawning man as they do nowhere else.

The weak side of young men is very weak; weak in many ways. The Passions, as they lead to what is noblest when under control and rightly directed, hurry us on to whatever is most disastrous if they break loose. We do not need to be led into temptation; we have it within us. Jerome and St. Basil tell us that the very desert did not save them from as fierce

a conflict as they could have had in cities.* Jerome honestly tells us he betook himself to the penance of learning Hebrew, among other ways, to get over the evil. Youth is prone to excess, and once it begins does not know how to stop. If it do not determine in God's strength to turn a deaf ear to seductions around, or promptings within, if it do not avoid the least approach to indulgence, it is too likely to lose itself. It cannot be too watchful or jealously careful. It is not enough to shun unworthy companions or hurtful books, or the spectacle of vice; the imagination must be kept pure, or the gate is opened to the enemy. The thoughts are the seeds of acts, and corrupt us if shown the least favour. Checked in the suggestion, they die; but let work for a time, they leaven the whole man. They are the furnace-draught to blow slumbering sparks to flames. They kindle passion to a roaring mastery of us if allowed any entrance. The pure mind is a white lily in the muddiest waters; but uncleanness in the heart is leprosy that will show itself soon outside. But to keep the mind pure! Nothing is harder. To keep down weeds in foul soil; to keep off rust in damp air; to keep off swarming uncleanness, seeking to nestle in every flower, is not such a task.

The craving for pleasure, at once so natural and so dangerous, is another opening to weakness. Youth, sunny, golden-haired youth, ought to be happy, and

* Jerome, Ep. 18, ad Eustochium; and 95, ad Rusticum, Basilii, Ep. 2, ad Gregor., quoted in Gieseler's Geschichte, ii. 4.

is made to be so, but its very ethereal temper is its peril. It can find delight in anything, for it carries it in its own bosom. It is radiant as Apollo crowned with sunbeams, and it has his lyre. Dull, pleasureless youth is another name for disease or oppression. The merry laugh, the bright smile, the rejoicing spirits, are gifts of God, to be used, not repressed and forbidden. Seriousness does not mean solemnity, and is all the truer and deeper as the counterpart of a natural gladness. God made joy, and the devil sorrow. The baby comes, and the saint dies, with a smile. The skies are blue, the sea glitters, the flowers are strewn all over the world and far away up the hills, and the graves are soon hidden by waving grass. It is well for youth to be happy :

Gather your rosebuds while you may,
Old Time is still a flying;
And flowers which bloom so fair to-day,
To-morrow will be dying.

But we are not to abuse our blessings, or surfeit ourselves with a gluttony of either one kind or another. Pleasure worth the name must be innocent, and must come only as a relaxation from work. To give oneself up to it is to miss it in any true sense. Even Cicero, though only a moralist, declares that he is not worthy to be called a man who is willing to spend even a single day wholly in pleasure.* Mere lightness is only a foil to something graver, where the taste is healthy. It is the vox-humana stop in the

* Qui unam diem velit esse in voluptatem.

solemn roll of the Psalm of Life. To do nothing but laugh, or to laugh mainly, is to write one's own condemnation. It is a shallow stream that dimples all the way. Nothing hurts worse than frivolity ; nothing unfits for business more, or forms worse habits for success, or wastes the time in which we might mould the future, and nothing leaves less return. Only to "giggle and make giggle," as Cowper says of the clerks in the office he attended, is hardly a fit use of life. There is something better than laughing, after all. The story told by Roger Ascham of Lady Jane Grey opens a new world to mere triflers, and there are others as pleasant within our reach. Her father and the duchess having passed by, hunting in the park, her tutor asked her if she would not like to join in the sport? "All the sport in the park," said she, "is but a shadow of that pleasure I find in this book"—a volume of Plato she had in her hand. The mind and the heart are nobler parts of us than our mere animal spirits, and have enjoyments of their own. Not to seek pleasure from such higher sources, but to give ourselves up to inferior, is to barter our birthright for Esau's pottage. If you be wise you will vary your pleasures, and add to them by mixing the grave with the gay. Mere amusement soon cloy, and leaves even Xerxes to offer a royal gift to any one who could invent some new spur to his satiety. Nothing grows duller than mere amusement, and no one needs it so much as he who has most of it. But to be a mere fribble is not the chief end of man.

Of guilty pleasure I shall say little ; the conscience condemns it. " It is the bait of sin," says Plato.* It destroys peace, it deadens the feelings, it leads to all other evils ; its edge shelves so suddenly that we are out of our depth and gone before we fear danger. Youth, inexperienced and warm, is in the greatest peril if it take the first step towards it. There is no end of the ruin it works to body, soul, and spirit. It degrades a man in his own eyes ; it keeps him in fear of discovery, and it turns him from all good.

I waive the quantum of the sin,
The hazard of concealing—
But, oh, it hardens all within,
And petrifies the feeling.

The *Will* in youth is, as a rule, weak and irresolute, and ready to yield to a stronger, it may be for evil. Indeed, we lean towards evil rather than good. A young man is at once simple and trusting, and yet self-confident. To a certain point he thinks nobody knows but himself, but he is the very reverse beyond it. His inexperience makes him dependent, and look to others. He has no choice in this, for he is only a learner in the ways of the world, and must have models and heroes. Unfortunately he too often fixes on poor ones, for though almost a man in years, he may be but a boy in simplicity, and be taken with very gross idols. Credulity dies out but slowly, and looks at things through exaggeration and wonder. We are slow in having sound judgment, and still

* ἡδονὴ δέλεαρ κακῶν.

slower in using it rightly. Most young men have little or no individuality ; they are rather prints from some negative they have chosen to copy. They give themselves wholly when they do so at all. Some author, or companion, or public man, is re-produced in fac-simile, so far as may be. Inexperience is timid, and yields to assertion or fancied authority, and it is modest and hesitates even when right. It is clay in the hand of whatever potter may get it to work, and a climbing plant that clings to grass or weeds if no better stay be at hand. Vice recruits her victims as much by want of firmness, and by simplicity, as by a taste for wrong. That comes with indulgence. We get from one step to another till we are gone. No one ever intends to be what too many become. They want the courage to say No at the very first, and all the rest follows ; the first star in the glass soon runs the whole way across it. Independent, manly self-respect, is a hedge that keeps out much evil. Principle is of course needed, but firmness must give it its value. If you need copies, as you will, let them be right ones, and follow them only in what is right. Never be caught by appearances, or fine names, or assertions, and never think any evil too small to avoid it. Temptation never comes with a bare hook. The asp lies hidden among flowers. The devil gives the serpent the voice of a friend, and lays the young head on a silken lap before he sends for the Philistines.

The *Rashness* of youth needs utmost caution. It is twin sister to his self-confidence. It misjudges its

strength both of doing and resisting. It rushes in where caution would keep as far off as possible, and suffers every way by intemperate, ill-advised zeal. Indiscretion is natural to many, and is only slowly and bitterly cured, if ever it be so at all. Words and acts equally show it, and its opinions are no less ill-balanced, and lead to continual trouble, or it may be to lasting evil for life. Want of sense is as fatal as any other defect, and less bearable by others than most. It cannot see its error in most cases, but stands stoutly in self-defence. No one is sure of it in any conjuncture, for it has no reflection, and thinks only after it acts. Its feelings are stronger than its judgment, and it does not know how to look at a thing in all lights, or how to wait till the morning before taking its course. It sees only what it feels for the moment, and exaggerates one part of duty to the forgetting of others as vital. It thinks Fabius the Delayer* a warning rather than a model, and knows nothing of any attack but going straight forward. It is contentious to excess, and claims a monopoly of uprightness. It utters all its mind where a wise man would keep it till afterwards. It makes the most preposterous projects, and will hear no counsel. It is wiser in its own conceit than seven men that can render a reason; and though led like a child at times, is wholly intractable at others. Its confidence is largely another name for conceit, and so is its rashness, for it takes time and the rubs of life to make a

* Cunctator.

man know his level, and modestly keep to it. A great many young men are top-heavy, and only get trimmed as they go on. They bring one in mind of the Earl of Buchan, whose manuscript John Ballantyne would not print because he had not capital I's enough in his office ; and they only get modesty and becoming diffidence slowly. Self-command, humility, sound judgment, and firmness for good, are hardly spring flowers, though the whole may be found here and there in some, and one or others in many, in the "primrose days" of their life.

Splendid in gifts and capabilities and yet imperilled by manifold weakness, our early life needs a completeness from outside itself. Its defects must be corrected and its endowments hallowed ; the one by a perfect exemplar, the other by a high consecration, and for both we have nowhere to look but to God. What the sun is to the flower, sight to the eye, or sound to the ear, God is to man ; we find our complement only in Him. Youth, to be all intended by God, must ally itself with Him : change its own weakness into His strength ; its blindness into the wisdom that comes from above ; its ambition, from things earthly to those beyond. The tree lives in the air and light, and would wither if they were gone, and the soul, like a tree, must spread itself out in the surrounding grace and presence of God.

We are all made by God for Himself, because living for Him is at once His due and the supremest bliss of the creature. He gives nothing in fee simple ;

He only lends on prescribed conditions. Even in nature there must be a return ; nothing is made only to receive. The winds and the waves, the clouds and the rain are only His servants doing His will : not a leaf or a flower ; not a wing in the air, nor a worm, but is God's steward, with measured power for allotted ends. The whole universe stands before Him and ministers to Him. All things living and dead hold from Him. The highest angel and the moth are alike dependent. Around us, over us, in all things, we see only His embodied will,—sailing in the clouds ; rolling through the storm ; shining in calm skies ; waving in field or forest, or glancing in streams and oceans. The seasons as they roll are but the varied God. The universe is full of Him as the sky with day ; it is only the veil behind which He sits dimly visible ; the garment which at once hides and reveals His glory.

But if nature be thus a servant ; much more such as we. Our higher gifts are only so much more responsibility, for the measure of obligation is the only limit of power. We are put in trust with all that we have and are—youth, manhood, age ; body, intellect, soul ; our words, thoughts, and acts ; our influence and our substance ; our time, and all that faithful diligence and ability can make of it. Nature teaches our duty. The uttermost leaf repays the gifts of the sun, no less than the root those of the soil. The air and light and rain are owned in green branches and sheets of blossom. Not a bud refuses its tribute ; and what are

our moments but buds which must break into leaves and fruit, and make all our life beautiful !

But, of all life those early years which are its opening pride must be most sacred. Our crown ;— we can do nothing less than cast it at His feet who gives it, that He may give it us back bright with His favour. If nature return all expected from her, we can be put no lower. The flower is fragrant from its bud to its last leaves ; light burns from its kindling to its last moment ; and our stewardship must be no less comprehensive. To answer our end we must be God's from the dawn of our days to their close. Life finds its completeness in being devoted to Him ; it secures its own glory by being, like nature, but in a sense far higher and nobler, filled with His spirit, as a jewel with light.

How great the glory of youth thus related to God is beyond the putting in words. There is nothing so grand among men. A young life freely given to its God in the dew of its early hours, with its strength and unbroken vigour, its energy, its hope and enthusiasm, and with its generous and untarnished affections, is a spectacle equally touching and elevating. Earth giving its best to heaven ; the child passing to manhood true to his unseen Father ; the snowy lamb of our years, the best of the flock, vowed on the altar of Love and Duty—nothing is more commanding. A godly youth, in its promise, and its performance, is the true first-fruits of the world. Early piety is the giving to God what we delight to give, in our early warmth,

even to the object of earthly Love—an entire dedication which forgets self, and finds its supremest joy in the thought that it may be accepted. Youth, beautiful always, never looks so divine as when it beams with the favour of God.

CHARACTER.

WHEN a Greek uses the word Character—for it is a Greek word—he might mean either the letters of any writing or inscription, or the impression of a die or seal on a coin or wax, or he might apply it metaphorically to the qualities shown in our words and actions—the stamp and image of our minds or principles. It is with this use of it I have to do.

We are all busy, each moment, in this self-revelation. Not a word or act, nor even a look, escapes us but has our signet on it; and our lives, as a whole, are the counterpart of our thoughts, as the image is of the mould. In the aggregate, they make up our Character or Simulacrum—our true Ghost, which walks the earth, living, visible, and potential, both during our lives and long after. Men's spirits are embodied not in flesh and blood only, but in their daily words and doings, as well.

This double life begins with our own beginning, but it becomes a power for good or evil only as our intelligence gives us responsibility. We mould it by our free choice, but we express it often unconsciously. In one sense it is completed only with life, but its

influence affects ourselves and others all through. We are like the weaver who plies his shuttle and fills in the web, thread by thread, but has to wait to the end to see it as a whole. We work on the wrong side, like him, and need Death to reverse it before we can see it aright. But the loom goes unrestingly, and the pattern is daily fuller. The point is, whether we work at God's loom or the Devil's.

Character grows, for the most part, insensibly, as the life grows at first. Now and then it gets notable impulses which we can mark, but commonly, it grows imperceptibly, like our bodies. It drinks in food like the tree, from both earth and sky, and from hidden sources in both, and, like it, shows its whole history on its boughs and branches from the first. The sunshine and the storm; the cold north wind and the soft south; the knife or the neglect, write themselves all over life, in its knots and gnarls, or smooth branches; in its leaning this way or that; in its stunted barrenness or broad shadow; its bending fruitfulness, or its woody wantonness. Not a leaf but leaves its mark; not a sunbeam but has told on it, not a rain-drop but has added to it. The same tree that is soft and spongy in a fat swamp, with its heavy air, grows hard and noble on the hill-side. Spitzbergen forests are breast-high, and Nova Scotia hemlocks mourn their cold wet sky in long weird shrouds of white moss. The influences round us are self-registering. Our spirits, like the winds, unconsciously write their story in all its fulness on the anemometer—Life. Slowly

in light airs, quickly in storms—all goes down. Little by little the whole comes in the end. Single acts may show Character, but they seldom form it, though some are supreme and ruling. It grows ring by ring, and the twig of this year becomes the bough of next. Our habits are another name for it, and they grow like the grass. The man's face lies behind the boy's, but it comes out only after a round of winters and summers.

We may for a time deceive men as to our character, but the very cheat is true to nature, when discovered; it marks a moral blemish which goes to make up the man. There is no falsifying character, rightly read; to the All-Knowing the man and his act are substance and shadow. The light and shade write themselves in a sun picture which is beyond bribery, and does not know flattery. There are no profiles, like Hannibal's portrait, to hide a blind side, but only the full face, like Cromwell's, with the warts or wrinkles, as well as anything nobler.

Character, like a well-cut jewel, shines whichever way we approach it. Life without it is only a mask. What is called public opinion is the verdict of the world on it, and is courted, and dreaded as their master, by kings and even by nations. It stops armies; reforms abuses; colours diplomacy; and makes despots liberal. No will is so overgrown but its waves are stayed by its feeble sands. Opinion, as Pascal well says, governs everything, and nothing more directly than personal character. To lose it is

ostracism to a king as much as to a peasant. Honour, without it, is like the shout to Herod in his silver robes that he was a god, when he felt himself being eaten of worms. A good name is the best jewel in any crown ; the pearl of great price without which all others are a lie. Intellect is as sensitive in this as grosser powers. Social proscription withered all Byron's laurels and made his life a sad agony, cheered only by the hope of posthumous vindication. Wealth quails before it, and offers a king's ransom to win back even an appearance of respectability. Australia has many such stories of millionaire convicts. In common life Character is existence. To feel oneself a leper is the last misery : it damps all energy, sours the looks, roots up self-respect, and makes a man tremble at the rustle of a leaf. Guilt, real or imputed, feels itself dogged by a double shadow. It knows its own story, and thinks every one else knows it. It loses the bright face and straight look, and dreads the tipstaff at each corner. A ghost walks the dreary chambers of a guilty conscience, and there is no laying it. Penitence may make peace with heaven, but not with ourselves : the spots come out again, let us wash them in a whole lake of tears. There is no peace to the wicked. Cain's mark was not limited to murder.

Some men, indeed, are so sunken that their standing with the world at large does not trouble them, but even they do homage to the value of Character in some lesser circle. No one can live without a good name with some. The lowest have their confraterni-

ties whose good opinion salves self-respect. We are climbing plants that must run up something, and cling to weeds if we have not standards. But in the measure in which we are indifferent to the loss of Character we mark our own degradation. To be happy without it is to be less than a man; and is a more terrible punishment than even self-accusation. Like caterpillars, with the winged Imago eaten out of them, and nothing but the worm left,* such beings, without a soul, are only the form and ghastly wreck of men. There is nothing left to die but the body.

So inexpressibly precious is a good name, that the very dread of its loss is often fatal. Misfortune often has slander in its train, and the terror of her evil tongue many times breaks the spirits and not seldom the heart. A pointed cannon is nothing to a pointed finger, when the sensibilities are keen. To think, even wrongly, that we have lost it, gnaws like the Spartan's fox. To look men in the face, to stay in the same neighbourhood, are impossible: old associations are broken up; any sacrifice made; friends left; and escape sought in new scenes.

What others besides the victim suffer tells the same story of its supreme value. No one ever bears all the burden of real or imputed wrong doing. A father suffers hardly less than his profligate son, and certainly feels more, in many cases. Like corruption, a

* The Ichneumon fly does this with different insects: notably, with the *Pontia Brassicæ*, the common Cabbage Butterfly. The Imago is the future butterfly.

speck infects all round it. A whole family withers under the blight of the lost character of one of its members, as the whole body is fevered by a local injury. When the tares are pulled up the wheat comes with them. What tears, what prayers, what sacrifices, what humiliation does the shadow of shame wring from a household. Round dishonour there is only desolation.

Character, if well-nigh alone, still commands our respect or love, in spite of many defects or weaknesses. Intellect, like ice, is colourless : no one has more of it than the devil. Power, eloquence, exact morals, so far as the world sees, knowledge, and Ahitophel's wisdom, may dazzle or awe, but may after all count for little in our estimate of their possessors ; but goodness has our homage and our hearts. It makes up for many wants. All the world loves my Uncle Toby ; and what is it that makes us reverence little children ? The Image of God is the same whatever reflects it, and nothing can make up for its absence.

A good name is one of the few honours which all men alike desire. Flattery cannot court a monarch with anything beyond it, and the humblest think themselves still rich if they retain it. Hypocrisy is the homage that worthlessness pays it. Vice makes a mask of the skin of Virtue, and whitens its sepulchres laboriously. There is no sin but seeks to cheat the world by an alias, and hardly a sinner who does not cheat himself by apologies and mitigations. We are all saints by daylight and in public. Men who seem

insensible to shame in youth often affect severity in later life : meanness often gives way in age to the love of praise, and seeks, if not sooner, at least in dying, to gain the poor consolation of a posthumous character. Delicate virtue needs airing, and gets it. We honour goodness even by flattering the dead, at once for our own sakes, and for charity. Blifils' epitaph is a canonisation, though both in life and death he really had the hatred and contempt he deserved. To have been related to goodness sheds a mild reflection of it on ourselves.

Churchyard virtues let us into one of the great secrets of this universal respect for Character. It is what men prize most in their fellows in any station, and the one hope of a desirable remembrance after death. Fragrance clings to the name of goodness long after life, as it does to the broken vase or the withered rose-leaf, and it sheds the same sweetness everywhere. Cowper's Cottager, and Crabbe's Isaac Ashford, are saints no less than Edward the Confessor. Plant a rose anywhere it smells the same ; in a corner it fills the air as much as if it were in the centre. Character is a power that outlives men for good more than for evil. Wilberforce has left us more than a generation ago, but the remembrance of his lofty principle, unspotted goodness, and universal Humanity, keeps his name alive in the hearts of men as sacredly as ever. The mere statesmen of his day are forgotten, except by politicians ; he is remembered and honoured by all. Fox had perhaps greater

genius, and no one surpassed him in noble sympathies, but his want of character neutralised all in his lifetime, and has left him, since, only the tribute of as much sorrow as admiration. There is a saintly light round goodness that neither intellect, nor natural tenderness, nor the most enlightened sentiments, can create. Even in private life real worth makes itself felt all round; is honoured and imitated by many whom it never knows, and long remembered with respect. It is independent of position or endowments. The grave of the Dairyman's Daughter has become a pilgrimage, and every neighbourhood has its local saint.

It is a touching illustration of its value, that there is no legacy of more real moment to a child than the reputation of a parent. To have been the son of one whose memory lingers like light in the air, is not only a delightful recollection, and a powerful stimulus, but a great material aid in life. No household can be called poor with such an inheritance, nor any parent really lost whose nobler life still survives in the breasts of his children, and, while animating them to follow his example, predisposes others to befriend them.

Character is the only foundation for real success. There may be a show of prosperity when principle is wanting, but if it cheat others it never cheats one's-self. The player himself, behind the scenes, thinks very differently of the stage effects from the spectators: he knows the other side of the painted shams, and that what is gold to the audience is tinsel at hand. Our

happiness must be within us or nothing can give it. What the world calls good fortune is often the worst for peace and enjoyment. It is not possession, but desire of it that gives pleasure ; without the spur of hope or ambition the mind loses its energy, and falls back on itself in listless satiety. It is the chase that delights, not the capture ; and what looks bright in the air is often poor enough when we get it. Byron's figure of our enjoyments being like plucked flowers, which we must destroy to possess, is true as it is striking. They are the painted butterflies which a touch defaces. A clear conscience sings in the breast, like a bird in a cage, and makes a heaven wherever it be ; but honour, or money, or place, without it, are children's toys. Mere getting is not success ; there are many poor rich men, and many rich poor ones. To have a soul, like a sun, gilding everything round it, is the true prosperity : to have our wealth in the bosom as well as the bank.

Still, while it is thus true that character *is* success, it is more ; it gives an open door to whatever advancement or qualifications make possible. To be merely upright and trustworthy is, of course, insufficient ; for the porter may be as good a man as his master, and yet could not take his place. But, with due qualifications, a good name is the best means of either attaining or keeping any promotion. Honest worth goes far of itself, with very humble abilities ; for mere common sense and good principle count far more in the market than we suppose. A young man may

have any capacity, it will weigh nothing if confidence cannot be put in him. Interest has keen eyes, and soon appraises its servants at their true value. Appearances may deceive for a time, but, once detected, the game is over. It is nothing that there be many good points ; character alone gives them value. A slip may be condoned, but even the suspicion of anything serious is fatal. The finest fleece goes for nothing if we see the wolf's muzzle, and we settle the wind by a very small feather. Want of confidence, like a rotten foundation, racks and brings down whatever may rest on it, be it ever so good in itself. A look, or a word, may let out a long masked hypocrisy, and no one can act and forecast so perfectly as to be never at fault. Many things, of course, may hinder advancement ; slowness, idleness, want of judgment, incurable trifling, want of interest in a calling : but many of these will be borne for long, and patiently striven with. A flaw in the man, however, is deadly ; one whiff of a moral taint is enough. To be unsteady, dishonest, untruthful, or in any way unreliable, is hopelessly capital. An unfaithful servant is worthless to God or man. Character is the young man's "Open, Sesame !" before which the treasure houses of life stand wide for his entrance.

It is a serious thought that, while in one sense we really live only in our own breasts, since it is there alone we can be happy or wretched, in another, we cannot live for ourselves alone, but colour the story of others as well. Our own character, if we trace it,

is a mosaic gathered from many, we seldom know when or how. A word from one, an act from another, have turned us this way or that, till we feel that it no less takes many minds to make a man than to make a world. It would be a curious feat to distribute all that is borrowed in any one; the things and words that would go a-flying, often to strange sources, would astonish us all. But this makes life so much the more solemn, and character so much the more momentous, that, whatever we are, manly or weak, honest or shift, thoughtful or thoughtless, thrifty or prodigal, God-fearing or Godless, mean or large hearted, we are for others as well as ourselves. Character, for good or bad, is magnetic, and attracts or repels all in its sphere. We take our colours, like the clouds, from the light round us, as we drift into shade or sunshine. Example and influence brighten or darken us; not that we cannot choose, but that, largely, we do not. When we least think it we may be affecting others in their whole destiny. Responsibility sobers men, but none is to be named alongside mere Living. Consider, there is no thought uttered by look, or word, or act, but may move an eternity; none but sends influences circling through all ages, not, perhaps, to grow fainter and die away like a ripple on the ocean, but like sound on a great gong, to grow louder and louder the farther from the centre. We speak of good or bad stars; we are all one or other to some. In an awful sense we are each other's destiny. There is no one whose having lived is not felt in the Abyss, or on the Su-

preme Heights, for ever, and how his life may repeat and reverberate itself there, who can tell? Character is Michael discoursing for God, or the toad whispering into Eve's ear for the Devil; each colouring countless eternities. It is an awful thing to die, but it is a much more awful thing to live.

But if thus sacred as it affects others, what must Character be as it bears on our own future. The things that are, are only preparatory. Time is only the vestibule of Eternity, and, in itself, not worth the trouble it brings with it. Our years are the steps up to the Great Temple; so designed, but not always so used. The rough border, like a Chinese garden, opens into all delights beyond. At the best it is only the golden thread on the hill-tops; Eternity, the day that fills the heavens with its mighty light. But Time decides Eternity. The tree blooms as the colours laid at the roots determine. The great assize sits on the deeds done in the body. Every moment carries the threads to and fro in the loom of life, and fills in our destiny. The mark of God or of Cain is slowly coming out on our forehead day by day. Life is the building-yard, Eternity the ocean; and as the ribs, and plates, and girders determine, so will the voyage be.

All our Being is one, here or elsewhere. It is no stranger that life should affect the state after it than that itself was affected by the antecedents of birth, or that childhood and youth should affect old age. Aries must come before Cancer; the Ram before the

Crab. Sowing determines reaping: tares yield tares, and wheat, wheat. The man, as a rule, is only the development of the youth. Ungoverned will grows with our growth. Bad principles colour all our life. The child has already a life before birth, which yet is the same with our present, and so with that to which Death will be the birth. We speak of Time and Eternity as if they were different, but they are only local names for the same thing. It is all Eternity with the Immortals, as a river is all one from the secret springs of the mountains to the ocean. Life is only the brown shallow in the deep stream flowing immeasurably before and after. Its conditions and laws may be different in the next state from what obtain in this, but so do those of our own first being from what follow birth; and we know what changes pass over the lower creatures in their various developments. If thus with physical identity, much more with moral, for on it depends continuance at all. Break off this life from the next so that there shall not be one consciousness, but each shall stand by itself, and you have a new creation, for the man is no otherwise known to himself but by the continuity of his thoughts. But, if the same, then, like Zeuxis, we paint for eternity. The habits of to-day forecast our to-morrow: and in the complexion of life we have that of the world to come. We make our own lot; form our own character; choose our own path in the few years we are here, for all the ages beyond. Life carries a greater than Caesar and his fortunes, frail skill

as it is: it carries a Soul and its Eternity. The first bends of the brook tell which side of the watershed the river will take, and on which side of a continent it will meet the ocean, and so with life.

Such a die must needs have care in the throwing. It must be of unspeakable moment to be right here. The question is, what standard is to be followed; what pattern taken? Character means many things in different mouths, and in different ages and countries. Pascal hardly exaggerated when he said that it varied with the parallels of latitude and longitude. There is one code for one circle, and another for a second. There are as many consciences among men as there are prejudices or interests. There is the degraded conscience and the perverted; the conventional conscience and the instinctive; the educated conscience and the ignorant. Our own moral sense, our own intuitions and inspirations, are clearly unreliable. They may be talked aside, they may be colour blind; they may be choked with weeds and tares till there be no sign of them; they may be simulated by Jacobs seeking their birthright; they may run to straw, or they may never flower. There is perhaps no crime that has not been associated with religion. Infanticide has no horrors in China; murder was sacred in India; Plato and the Philosophers allowed nameless vices in actual life and in their ideal States; theft was criminal only when detected in Sparta; the Inquisition slaughtered thousands "for the greater glory of God;" Jesuits have written folios of cases of con-

science with amazing results ; amongst ourselves, the pulpit had nothing to say against the Corn Laws, that greatest iniquity of modern policy ; little against slavery, in certain circles ; our people have been left uneducated ; our workhouses are a constant reproach ; our public-houses ruin the masses by act of parliament ; we have Sheffield revelations of worse than Thuggism, and coal-pit revelations of women and children left to work like beasts ; we have money worship, and limited liability swindles on every hand ; and all without spoiling our self-approval or sanctimonious unction. Some consciences have felt at ease with each abuse you could name. Conscience is drugged by the air it breathes, as men get heady in wine vaults without tasting. I have known a gin-house keeper who made a habit of sitting before his bar on Sundays, while waiting for custom instead of going to church, with his Bible open on his white apron. The colour of actions, like that of objects, depends on the light. The man of honour of Bishop Berkeley and Fielding still survives ; selfish, unprincipled, lewd, but keen to resent affronts, true to conventional rules of courtesy, and trustworthy in a gambling debt, but in that only. The business man, tender enough, and generous in private, may be remorseless as Fate in his counting-house. He will make lead idols for the Hindoos, and subscribe to missions to convert them, on the same day. Your philosopher Square makes strange applications of "the fitness of things," or, like Emerson, apologises

for all evil as a disease, or as fate, or as good in the making. However the sensitive and upright may agree in general laws, or teachers be better than their systems, men are hopelessly opposed in details, and the endless imbroglia makes all human theories of no worth as a standard. Our ideal must be without, and above us. In our fellows we have only scattered virtues, and even they imperfect; so that if we should wish to gather into one the mangled form of Truth, and were ourselves equal to the task, we could restore only a marred and imperfect approach to it after all. Prismatic colours of goodness offer, thank God, on every side, but only in watery dust, or transient touches, or broken arches: the perfect circle is only seen, now, painted on the clouds and darkness that are round about the throne of God. A

It is in the revealed character of the All Perfect One alone that we can find the true ideal of our own. To be partakers of the divine nature is the apotheosis of ours, and it is possible in a measure. As the dew or the crystal is filled with the light, our souls may be filled with God. The spark is kin to the sun, and the soul to God. Godliness is God-likeness; for God, like the light, repeats Himself wherever He shines. The sun is doubled in a thousand waters, and God is mirrored in all holy souls. To be like the best of men is to command admiration and love: to be like an angel is the highest hyperbole of common speech; but to be like God is to have the poor raiment of lower goodness made a white and glistening transfigu-

ration. The sun gives day over the illimitable regions that repose in his beams: the face of God sheds spiritual day throughout the universe. The light is a robe to innumerable worlds: the splendour of God is cast round all His creatures who seek it. ✓

But, dropping metaphor, where shall we learn what God is and what we should be? The answer of a christian man is, in his Word, especially as it makes known the plan of Redemption. The life, and teachings, and death of Christ, with the illustrations of Apostles and Prophets, give us at once the perfect ideal of God and of Man. The character of Jesus Christ is instinctively felt to offer a stainless and archetypal manhood, which forbids our accepting any humbler standard. It might have been difficult to realise the divine nature and will in mere abstract commands, or in the conflicting problems of Providence, but the clouds and darkness that are round the throne were left behind at the Incarnation, and the life and words of the Son make known, in a softened radiance, the Almighty Father. Our eyes can see, and our hands handle the word of life. Bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, we can gaze, and comprehend, and copy. The life we ourselves have to live has been lived, in our own nature and amidst like temptations. We have to walk no untrodden path: it has been opened for us by the feet of Christ. We have to scale no unattempted heights: the cross of Calvary looks down on the highest. Other teachers have urged theory whilst they lamented their own defects,

but Christ was Himself the perfect exemplar of His own precepts—Himself the one perfect Christian. Socrates was said to have brought philosophy from the clouds to the abodes of men ; but Jesus Christ familiarised earth with the spectacle of a Divine Life such as before had been known only to heaven. The knowledge of God written at first on the heart, had become worn and effaced, like a weather-stained legend, but it can be retraced and restored by the transcript inscribed in the Gospels and the Epistles. The pure religion of primitive ages had long been lost, but it has descended again amongst us in the manifestation of God in Christ. We cannot look on the full light of the sun ; our eyes are too feeble ; but we can watch and follow it through the mists and vapours that curtain and soften it. Revelation is the Indian summer that fills the skies with golden air, through which we can look at the sun himself :

Religion not only gives us, thus, the one only perfect ideal : it supplies beyond all things else the loftiest motives. Self is always to be distrusted, and obedience for reward must always stand lower than when it is the delighted expression of love. The true imitation of Christ knows nothing of wages. There is not even that delicate flattery of our pride which urged the Stoic, and still moves the most, as if we might play the Pharisee at the thought of our goodness.

Love feels it is only owning its debt, whatever it does, for more received and forgiven than it can ever repay. It is the service of the delivered to the de-

liverer ; of the ransomed to Him who has bought him with a great price. Boasting is abhorrent ; humble gratitude only sighs over unworthiness. Obedience to God, which is the moulding our character by what is made known of His, is a steady principle springing from love. The Almighty Father rightly claims, for our creation, and for the ten thousand blessings of life, a proportionate loyalty. What we pay the highest on earth by a natural instinct, is infinitely more due to the Highest in heaven. But the supreme impulse must ever be the revelation of His boundless pity in the story of the Cross. God manifest there is the cynosure of the universe, and must needs be ours especially whom it most concerns. It is the star of our worship, as well as our guide. The New Testament writers see it ever before them, and rejoice with great joy at it. "The love of Christ constrains them : " they are not their own, but led captive at its glittering wheels. To them to live is Christ : they walk as He walked ; reproduce His spirit ; copy His acts ; adopt His whole life that their own may be its image. His character—that is, the divine—is their transcendent model.

Along with this personal feeling there is, also, in all their writings, a still loftier homage to His goodness, for its own beauty. Scripture is little else than a hymn of heavenly love. The vision of perfect grace in the Holy One fills the heart henceforth and for ever. Earthly love feeds on self-sacrifice, and its flame is sweeter than incense to the love of God in

Christ. We watch and toil even for the unworthy when love inspires, and think the labour and pain their own reward ; how much rather when He for whom we live is the worship of angels. To be like Christ is, for its own sake, the supreme ambition : to be loved in return is heaven. Cold morality will not do : mere human kindness leaves Him forgotten ; nothing contents but to be filled with God : to give ourselves up to sweet passages of love with our Beloved ; to live for Him and in Him. Such a frame touches that of the angels ; it makes life seraphic ; our graces breathe like a garden of spices. Character traced after such an ideal is the outline of Paradise.

But all natures do not rise to this sublime level ; and for them—perhaps, in a measure, for all—there need the hopes and fears of the future. Self-interest, if not undue, is innocent, and conflicts with no duty or principle. Even Love seeks its reward, by the grand road of self-sacrifice, for the perfect one Himself endured the Cross for the joy that was set before Him. Absolute disinterestedness is impossible if even to die for love be joy. But to call the golden fruits that spring from such a root by a doubtful name, is to confound opposites, and blame the light because it rejoices in shining. In mortals hope is legitimate for all our nature : for the heart that it may one day see Love face to face ; for the mind that it may one day leave shadows behind ; for the worn body that it may one day enter immortal rest. Heaven is wide enough for all, and has all manner of fruits. Wilberforce

thought of it as love ; Robert Hall, as ease from pain ; Arnauld, as rest. "There will be time enough to rest in the life to come," said Dr. Herzog, of Erlangen, to me last year, at Amsterdam. Richter says, in one of his Letters, "Shall we not give ourselves the joy of dreaming our dream of that overflowing heaven which must at last be ours, when, in the higher and warmer focus of a second world of youth, loving with higher powers, embracing a larger spiritual kingdom, the heart, from life to life, will open wider to receive the All?" "To depart is to be with Christ," says St. Paul. "We shall move up and down like a thought," says Luther. What power a hope so orbicular must have is thus seen, and what dread the fear of a lost eternity. The thought of self is part of our nature, and necessary to it. It does not, indeed, even when the rewards or evils are present and sensible, keep from wrong or uphold in good ; but if the world be bad with them, what would it be without them? They pass to blame when they stand alone, apart from loftier principles ; and in that case, as merely mercenary, weigh nothing with God or man. Money-changers have no place in the heavenly, more than in the earthly, temple. As hand-maidens to the nobler soul, the desires are ministers of God. Waiting on love, both hope and fear have much to do in forming and developing Character.

Determined often by the most trivial turns, and yet built up in its completeness only by the aggregate of our thoughts and acts through life—big, moreover,

with such tremendous issues—it is supremely wise, and, therefore, imperative, that our character be a constant care. Of all the works of Phidias or Praxiteles, which once drew the admiration of the world, nothing remains ; but the image within is immortal. The will and heart are at each moment moulding the spirit for eternity. Socrates used to say that he wondered how men who were so careful of the training of a colt, were indifferent to the education of a child, and left it in any hands ; but it comes still closer to us that we should be enthusiastic on such insignificancies, and neglect the Divinity that is within us all. That the soul, rounded by eternity, as a star by the heavens, should never look into the Infinite Spaces, is a wonder beyond philosophy to unriddle. So soon to face the awful splendours and make no preparation ! The shoreless sea coming up round the little islet of our life, and we asleep ! A seed of Paradise bowers and ambrosial fruits left to be buried in sand-drifts of neglect ! Mystery culminates in the relations of present and future. Slowly in the camera of the soul comes out the light-picture of character, to everlasting shame and contempt, or to glory, honour, and immortality, and to neglect it is to mock our own destiny. The weed of this life may be raised into a flower, to spring up again by the Fount of God when it has withered into the ground here. Have care, friend ; none can be too great : have heed ; none can be too constant.

Do nothing as if it were trifling ; to call it so may

be the greatest mistake of your being. In everything have the one aim—Heaven. Slur no part of your work. Minute faithfulness is needed every moment. A favourite flower has the gardener's thoughts from the first; whatever will tell on the symmetry, tints, and size of the blossoms, is weighed and cared for. The soil is mixed and sifted, perhaps gathered from distant parts; mouldered turf, the black earth of a mountain moor, the silver sand of a far-off bed, the forcing strength of far-fetched enrichments. He covers it by night, shades it by day, keeps off all weeds, watches each leaf that no spoiler mar it, removes each defect, waters it with a tender care, is never weary in his loving labours. If all this, for a flower that blows only to fade, the very type of evanescence,—what shall we do for that true "Everlasting," the heavenly amaranth—Life, whose blossoms may be sunbright in Paradise?

The more care and loving zeal are needed from the remembrance that nothing is more easily injured. Like the picture, as yet unfixed, a breath or a touch is fatal. Like the cistus, the leaves fall with the shadow of a cloud. Character maintained till death, is ineffaceable after it passes through it; but short of that, the peril is terrible. Repentance, if timely, is sufficient with God, but there is a fearful risk that spiritual life may be too far gone for recovery if there be delay. The charm of early godliness once broken—offence once allowed an entrance—the sorrow we think sincere may pass away before new temptations.

Carry your Character, as concerns God, as you would a priceless gift, which one stumble might shatter. Towards men it may be lost by the act of a moment, after the labours of a lifetime; and once lost, or even suspected, is hardly to be restored. The results and hopes of a long voyage perish with one touch of a rock; one false turn of the helm and Oblivion rushes in through the yawning bows. One lie, one act of dishonesty, one false step that shows, or seems to show, something wrong, is taken for the speck which tells the rottenness of the fairest fruit. The momentary gleam of his true nature through an angel face, showed Uriel the devil behind the mask, even in the surrounding sun. One stab lets the life out of Character as well as from the veins; one leak sinks the ship; one trickle through the sea-dyke is the herald of the whole sea; one rift in the lute and it is silent. A good name, like Cæsar's wife, must be not only above blame, but above suspicion. It is a Prince Rupert's drop, of which, if you break the least tip, the whole is dust. To lose our balance a moment is fatal as a stumble on Mahomet's bridge to Paradise.

To keep your Character pure is no easy task. Let me give you a few hints in aid.

Never forget that wrong doing cannot repay in the end. It may promise pleasure or profit, but is the old story of Eve's apple over again in every case. Shame, danger, self-reproach, and loss, follow it, as Hell follows Death in the Apocalypse. Delilah's smiles were a poor remembrance to blind Samson. The

fish thinks little of the bait when it feels the hook. Let nothing tempt you to a false step, whatever necessity or pretext may urge. Young men are often led astray by the fine names given to misconduct. It is good fellowship, or spirit, or seeing the world, or wild oats, or the like; but, after all, death is death, whatever name you give it. Never think anything too small to be worth notice. Break one thread in the border of virtue, and you don't know how much may unravel. It is the first step that costs trouble; take that, all may follow. To look on Bathsheba led to the whole tragedy that came after. The thought leads to the look, the look to the word, and the word to the act. Lewdness, drunkenness, theft, are only the end of perhaps very slight beginnings. He that loses his way thinks he is going all rightly, till it suddenly breaks on him that, indeed, he is lost. If the story of a drunkard were known, it would commonly show very innocent beginnings; pleasant evenings with friends; first the sitting with men fond of the bottle, then the tasting, and in the end the liking it. Dishonesty very rarely beging by intended theft; it is a loan at first; then it cannot be repaid; then it is not at once detected, and, so, to the sad catastrophe. Debt for what seemed needed may be the original impulse; or to get a trifle for pleasure or luxury; but all lead to the same goal. Or you first look at what is not your own, then like it, then handle it, and at last take it. Safety lies only in keeping clear of any approach to what is doubtful. Keep a mile from it.

Along a precipice, the nearer the wall the better. As the old proverb has it, he that would not hear the bell, must not meddle with the rope. In the cloudy regions of snow, among the mountains, absolute silence is enjoined, lest the vibration of the voice bring down an avalanche. To look into a depth goes far to make one leap into it.

"The worst figure of misfortune," says Carlyle, justly, "is misconduct." The blue summer skies of the soul are when you look up in the consciousness of a good name and with a calm bosom. To avoid the one and enjoy the other, distrust yourself. Pride goes before many kinds of fall. Confidence is rash; humility watchful. Bernard's saying is a good one, on seeing some one forget himself, "*Ille hodie, ego cras*"—"He to-day, I to-morrow." In war a wise general keeps his force guarded by scouts and pioneers, to warn and prepare if danger threaten, and no approach can be made by the foe without timely discovery and measures for defence. Have like caution against deadlier enemies; the temptations and ambushes of darkness, and the ever threatening army of the world's desires. Let prudence, humility, and principle, throw out their watchfulness before you, and never trust in a fancied security. Youth is heady and wilful, rash and petulant; so much so that the Greeks' word for a young man's act stood also for anything intemperate and inconsiderate.* As Lord Bacon puts it, young men are like an unready horse,

* *Νεανίσκος*.

that will neither stop nor turn. Humble in some ways, they are foolishly stubborn in others. Safety lies in diffidence and modesty, not in venturing and bravado. Some boast of being careless, and laugh off warning, as if no temptation could pierce their thick scales of resolution. Be jealous of yourselves, and seek strength from God. If you don't burn your fingers, you smudge them by handling lighted faggots. Remember how often you have come short of your purposes, and walk softly. It is presumption, not bravery, to skim the edge of broken ice. Be strong in God, weak in yourself. The stake is too great when it is your soul. The excitement of risk is inadequate to the peril. The game is not worth the candle. Depend, for forming and keeping your character, on fighting, not single-handed, but with heavenly grace at your side.

Mock characters, like false lights, are worse than darkness. There is any number of skin-deep saints in the world at all times; and sheep's clothing and long robes are always in great demand in the market. Indeed, we all use cosmetics of the moral kind to remove freckles or wrinkles. To meet the respectable, smooth-shaved, decorous, venerable Ornaments of Society we sometimes see, you would not suspect that any slanders could find birth against men so soft spoken, so frank, and so confidential. But they do. Raven black and dead eyes, and drawn-down corners of the mouth, and an unexceptionable tie, don't always stand for godliness. *Cucullus non facit*

monachum—'The cowl does not make the friar. That highly respectable board of directors, so hale, loud spoken, well fed, seem, every man of them, fit for prizes at an exhibition of commercial moralities ; still, they are in trouble about loans, or contracts, or prospectuses. That manufacturer sings loud in his pew on Sundays, but makes thirty-five inches to the yard on Mondays ; and that prosperous shopkeeper, has strangely dark windows ; and does that one believe his own puffs ? The millennium has not come yet, and can hardly be hoped for, by appearances, at any very short date. Somehow, the pottles do not show the same strawberries all the way down, in all cases ; and jockeys sometimes forget to tell a horse's faults ; and there have been books written on adulterations and tricks in trade ; and men's words or writings are not always the unclouded expression of their thoughts. And yet to meet men, how nearly perfect they seem ; in their suavity, innocence, and sentiments. There are a good many Siberian crabs, and apples of Sodom, and huge pears that look like honey and eat like wood. We have our panics, and thousand liquidations, and a hundred millions of railway stock unproductive, and Bankruptcy Court revelations. The crop of knaves and half knaves is by no means extinct. There is a dark side to a good many things besides the moon ; and has not the sun its spots, not to speak of eclipses that happen pretty widely throughout the universe.

Be you, young man, a contrast to all this. Cha-

racter that is only a mask is beneath you, and mere conventional goodness is a lie of the Devil. Determine, from the first, to be transparent and truthful to God and your fellows, let Mephistopheles say what he likes. It is better, after all, to have the Universe on your side than against you. Curses, like chickens, come home to roost; and so do Falsities, if not outwardly, yet in your soul. I pray you don't offer a prophet's chamber in your conscience to Satan. Life is sacred; keep it so. We are born for a purpose, and can serve it only as we serve God. Humanity is a whole, not a mere mob of generations, and has a destiny in which every one has a set part. The little moment of our being is great enough to live well in, and leave true work behind it. Play the man, not the trickster. Evelyn saw men at Leghorn staking their liberty for life in mad gambling, and, having lost, presently led off into slavery. He who has to do with a Lie, stakes his soul, and loses in any case. Character, pure and noble, chimes in with the eternal harmonies; but Falsehood is a hideous clangour, now and for ever. What any life, however humble, can do is a secret with God; it may widen its influence through ages, or it may leave a trace seen only by Him. But if valiantly, earnestly, nobly, lived, by the light of God's truth and laws, it is holy for ever. The City of God slowly rises through the ages, and every true life is a living stone in some of its palaces. You were made for God, young man, from eternity, and no Lie is of Him, be it in trade or profession, in act

or in word. Insincerities are marks on the devil's tally, and so are all hypocrisies and shams. Let your character be real, the shining warp and woof of each day working out the part God has set you in the great loom of Time.

COMPANIONS.

THERE is no influence more powerful in youth, and sometimes quite through life, than friendship: none more delightful or blessed where it reaches an approach to its best. "It is the alloy of our sorrows," says Jeremy Taylor, in his poetical way, "the ease of our passions, the discharge of our oppressions, the sanctuary to our calamities, the counsellor of our doubts, the clarity of our minds, the emission of our thoughts, the exercise and improvement of what we meditate."* The poets, ancient and modern, return perpetually to its praises, and one of Cicero's most delightful essays bears its name.

It is so beautiful, indeed, where pure and noble, that the world has cherished the record of its most famous examples, both true and fabled. Athenodorus, who, after dividing his estate with his brother Xenon, divided it again when Xenon had spent his own share—Lucullus, who would not accept the Consulship till his younger brother had enjoyed it for a year—Pollux, who divided his immortality with Castor—Damon and Pythias, the philosophers, of whom Pythias was

* The Measure and Offices of Friendship.

so willing to die for his friend—are sweet echoes of human love, sent down from generation to generation, out of Pagan antiquity.* Scripture adds its own list, in the story of Jonathan and David—the heir to a throne fondly loving and helping him by whom he knew he was to be supplanted—of Aquila and Priscilla, who would have laid down their necks for St. Paul, and of St. Paul himself and young Timothy. In our own history, many divine instances shine like stars out of the blue. We have the deathless story of Beaumont and Fletcher, whose books are twin fruits on a single stem—and Cowley and his friend Harvey, Milton and young Lycidas, Gray and West, and the Richardsons, father and son, have memories of mingled fragrance. “We make one man,” says the elder Richardson of his son; “and such a compound man may probably produce what no single man can.” Akenside, when in danger of dying from want, had £300 a year allowed him by Mr. Dyson; Southey lived for years on the bounty of his friend Wynne; Coleridge found a calm harbour in his last years in Mr. Gillman’s, as Dr. Watts had for half a lifetime in Sir Thomas Abney’s; and Henry Hallam lives a purer than earthly life in Tennyson’s “In Memoriam,” as Edward Irving does in the Threnody of Thomas Carlyle. Bright flowers of love, all of them, along the dusty highways of the world—wet, like Gideon’s fleece, with the dews of Heaven, in the dryness around!

* See Jeremy Taylor’s list of Worthies. The legend of Damon and Pythias varies, but the old form of it is best known.

Looking back from middle or later years, we very seldom think of ourselves as single figures in the retrospect. Opening life and friendship are twin thoughts, for we seldom make close friends after it has passed. Long-ago has always a companion in the landscape, and Reminiscence is never brighter than when it wanders over the scenes in which he bore a part. It is strange how brightly the hill-sides, and meadows, or winding brooks, where we roamed together, shine out through the haze of gathering years. Mutual confidence, long communings, common thoughts and interests, make life, on the calm waters of these early memories, float double, like Wordsworth's swan and shadow. Those distant sunlit glades of Recollection! We enjoy Friendship while we have it, as we do bright skies or the south wind, without thinking of the source of so much pleasure, but as we look back on it from farther and farther removes, it is like looking at sunny hill-tops through intervening shadows.

Nothing tells on us more than our choice of companions. Fletcher of Saltoun used to say he could mould the will of a nation if he could give it its songs: any one could mould the life of a young man, if he could prescribe his companions. Youth is clay for whatever potter may put it on his wheel: sensitive paper for any artist to put what picture on he pleases. Yet, hardly, for though it have no character developed as yet, it has tendencies, good and bad, in the germ, of which the one set may grow or the other, like a

tree of many grafts, of which the same skies that open some, shrivel others. I think it certain that none are all bad, whatever they may become, nor any all good. Young saint, old devil, says the proverb, though much too harshly. Yet, Nero and Caligula were both full of promise in boyhood. It was their companions, their position, possibly a taint of madness, and certainly a strong dash of Satan in the blood, that gave them the names they have. It is a story older than Rehoboam, who paid for it like them, though he seems to have outlived it. No doubt some have affinities more hopeful than others; for morals, I fear, like scrofula or good health, have a deal to do with one's parents; and yet, after all, Christ made no exceptions when he spoke of little children and the kingdom of Heaven. I apprehend it is only moral allotropism in any case: different results from like materials by different treatment. There are, at least, no flowers quite black; let us come back to that: though some take one shade, some another, out of the sunlight; some are dropped with blood, and others blow into lilies. Nobody was ever at his worst all at once, says the Latin proverb. The rock-pine, hard and straight on the hill-side, is spongy and worthiess in a wet bottom. Nothing grows below the yew. The channel makes the river; broken to endless rapids, it may be, like Jordan—the Descender—and falling into a Dead Sea, or flowing through green meadows and past rich cities. No one is born without the capacity for good. The wayside in the sower's field may have been as good soil as any,

till trampled hard and barren. Hopefulness may turn to mockery, if without any help, as wheat runs to worthless grass if only left to itself. A young man needs no prompting to forget himself, the leaven of evil is in him, and, if not counteracted, will work if he were alone in a wilderness; for solitude, with the Devil inside us, is as bad as a crowded city. To have our passions master us, is worse than to be sewn up in the Roman parricide's bag, with a dog, an ape, and a serpent. But, as things go, nothing tells oftener for or against any one, than the associations he makes in the common course of his youth. It is a standing explanation of a young man's ruin that he got among bad companions. We take the colour of the society we keep, as the tree frogs of Ceylon do that of the leaf on which they light, or as Alpine birds change with winter or summer. The east wind strips the spring blossoms: the warm south opens them into clouds of pink. Ask Shame and Guilt, and they will tell you they were made what they are by Example and Intercourse: and on the other hand, Honour and Usefulness commonly hasten to own that they owe everything, humanly speaking, to some one they have copied.

What companions to choose, what to avoid, and how to judge of either is thus of the first importance. As helps I submit the following hints.

1. Never form sudden friendships, nor break off tried ones lightly.

It was a saying of Augustus, that he neither began,

nor broke off his friendships rashly.* Plutarch advises us to try proposed friends as we do coin, before acceptance. Shakspeare is full of like warnings :

“The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel.
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatched, unfledged comrade.” †

Youth is unsuspecting because inexperienced, and is often as foolish with friendships as a child, who makes no difference between a knife and his mother's finger. It thinks it knows more than its seniors, and takes offence at their warnings. Any fair outside is enough, or any common pursuit, or hobby. A young man is extravagant and unsettled, with one passion to-day and another to-morrow, and gives his confidence presently to whoever can help or sympathise with his passing fancy. He is hardly a man as yet, in some ways, and feeling like a boy, acts like one. The world is new to him, and he gives his faith to any one who, he thinks, knows it. Indeed, the boy hangs long about us, for good in some ways, for evil in others. It makes strange heroes, and has extraordinary standards of manliness. Where sense sees only ground for aversion, simplicity, looking through the coloured air of exaggeration, sees endless attraction. It would be amusing, if it were not so sad, to think of the alliances youth strikes up. Antecedents are nothing; acquaintance beforehand is superfluous; love

* *Amare nec cito desisto, nec temere incipio.*

† *Hamlet, Act I., Scene 3.*

at first sight, and unbounded confidence, in a casual meeting, are its creed. As a child puts everything in its mouth, a young man takes every one to his heart. Foolish, unpractical, fond of excitement, generous, impracticable, except in its own humours, youth is a universal philanthropist. To touch another by one point of similarity in taste or pursuit is to run into one with him. Its Love is blind and knows nothing of half-heartedness. Early life must imitate, for it has all to learn, but it gives itself up to its tutors. It sees virtues where others see only vices or nothing: it believes in very commonplace heroes, and goes far to worship them. Stubborn, when crossed, it is led like a child where its fancy inclines. Like silly fish, it is caught by mock flies, and they often very poor counterfeits. Let it but think well of any one and it sees only what it wants to see in him, and becomes his mere double.

Be slow to make friendships. They are too sacred and serious to be lightly formed. Remember that, as Coleridge says, Experience, like the stern lights of a ship, shows only the way that has been gone over. Beware of your soft ductility. A companion means a copy, consciously or unconsciously, for you would not go with one you did not admire for something. Let acquaintance be one thing; intimacy another: the one for a circle; the other for single bosoms. Be pleasant without being confidential, and you may learn from most, and do not follow to evil because you wish hints in things harmless.

The different classes, unfit or fit for friends, might be variously put. The FAST YOUNG MAN stands at the head, but to describe him is to speak of a class with many varieties. He varies in every age, but is as old as Cain. St. Peter gives a glimpse of him, in his day, as a profligate wanton, a slave to his passions, spending his nights in wine debauches and vice, and filling the streets with his roistering noises.* Alcibiades was a noted instance, if all be true that is said of him, as to the mutilation of the busts of Mercury and his profanation of the mysteries; for defacing the gods, and mocking the secret rites of religion, is precisely what the whole race would think sport, in any age. Catiline and Clodius were samples worthy of bracketing along with him. It was such a joke for Clodius to get into Cæsar's house, to a woman's sacrifice, in girl's clothes, to make love to Pompeia, Cæsar's wife! Shakspeare has a whole gallery of life pictures of the genus;—degrading themselves; breaking their father's heart; wasting his substance; staining his name; consorting with any who could amuse them, however coarsely; playing with the laws, and with the public peace; lowering themselves every way; and thinking a carouse the greatest enjoyment. Hal was one, till he reformed. The Mohocks were the fast young men of Addison's day, importing into London midnight roughness and terror, like that of the savages whose name they bore. Sandwich and Wilkes, with their order of "New Franciscans," and

* 1 Pet. iv. 3.

their motto over Medenham Abbey, "Do as you like"—finding their sport in turning the most sacred rites of religion into profane and obscene burlesque—and Charles Fox, the brilliant and dissolute spend-thrift, gamester, and libertine, might stand for those of the last third of last century. For later times you can pick what illustrations you please; they are never wanting; unhappily, not even to-day.

How the fast young man gets his name is a question. I apprehend it hints at his spending whatever he has in purse, conscience, or health, with equal folly and recklessness. It depends somewhat on his position how he may show himself, for every rank, to the lowest, can boast of him. You find him as readily in the shop, the warehouse, the office, the chambers, the universities, or the schools, as in Mayfair or Blackwall. In every rank he lives for amusement alone, but it is always such as other men shun. As a rule, he drinks, or will soon do so, to be like his companions. He very commonly bets, honourably or the reverse, as his pocket is still whole, or runs low. If he has the money, he very probably gambles, and, if he has none, he will rather stand and see others do so than lose the excitement. He is nearly always idle or lazy, though there are strange exceptions in this, as with Byron, who was as industrious as he was loose. But, for the most part, his nights leave no energy for his days. His reading is greatly restricted to play-bills, sporting-lists, and highly spiced novels, or the issues of Holywell Street: his haunts are the streets, taverns, singing-

saloons, and casinos. His thoughts by day are what exploits he can organise for the night. His money is lavished on vice and folly, but he owes for everything else. Anything solid or useful he hates, and as to religion, he has left that hull down from the first. Innocence is simply fair game to him, for banter or ruin. He mocks at a novice who will not drink, or keeps his purity, or cares for his Sundays. As I said, he is fast in spending all that he has, health, morals, money, character; fast in deadly precocity in everything vile.

Yet it would be a mistake to say that he was wholly bad. If he were so there would be less danger. No one is without some good touches: even villains have their redeeming points, and young fools must have more, for fastness is often want of thought as much as anything. Tom Jones was at bottom a far better fellow than Blifil, though he was as fast as his half brother was staid. It does not do to condemn men wholesale: you may condemn their ways, if bad, as you like. But loose morals are all the more dangerous when joined with good-heartedness. It is no reason for excusing fastness that it may be joined with good qualities. Even Nero had flowers thrown on his grave, and Lady Macbeth could not murder Duncan, he was so like her father. Dante gives Brunetto virtues in the seventh circle of Hell. Amiability in a young man, or other attractions, leads to companionship in spite of his vices, for no one intends to copy him in them, at the first. A fine voice, lively spirits, that he can tell a

good story, or has a touch of Yorick about him ; or perhaps his good nature leads to acquaintance, and then all the rest follows. The Devil takes care to cover his pits with flowers, Simplicity, caught by such showy charms, or good traits, flies round the candle till it lies at the bottom, or breaks away with scorched wings. It thought of the light, but it finds the flame. Without an idea of harm, it goes where so much is innocent, only to find that it has got into bad ways, before it well knows it. The only safety is to have nothing to do with such risks. If you don't want to hear the bell, don't touch the rope. You may propose only to go in a little way, where there is no danger, but the water shelves suddenly, and plunges you as deep as the others, when you least think. If you once join a circle it needs more moral courage than many have to break away from it, for it is hard to stand ridicule and the petty persecution of names.

2. The vampire companion is another enemy to be avoided. The race is as old as sin. Shakspeare, who knew so much of us all, has drawn him at full length :

“Every one that flatters thee
Is no friend in misery ;
Words are easy, like the wind,
Faithful friends are hard to find.
Every man will be thy friend
Whilst thou hast wherewith to spend ;
But if store of crowns be scant
No man will supply thy want.

If that one be prodigal,
Bountiful they will him call;
If he be addict to vice,
Quickly him they will entice.
But, if fortune once do frown,
Then, farewell his great renown;
They that fawned on him before,
Use his company no more."

There are plenty of trencher friends, plenty of the sucker order, who stick to you while you have where-withal, but let you go when you are drained. True vampires, they fan you with their devil's wings while they take your blood. Leeches fasten on the living, but drop off from the dead. Timon of Athens has had many heirs to his experience. Let me give you a story from real life, for which I can vouch. A gentleman, lately dead, had spent a fortune on too lavish hospitality, till he sank at last to destitution, and was thankful for a piece of bread or any dole or gift. He had called on one, then rich, whom he had often feasted in his better days, telling his circumstances, and seeking anything he could beg, especially any cast-off clothing; and the day and hour had been fixed for him to come again and get what could be looked out for him. It happened that a second person, one of the same circle, had come on business to the house at the time when the unfortunate was to return, and was sitting with the master when a knock came to the door, and a servant announced Mr. —, who called by appointment. A faded and worn man, in wretched figure, bowed himself into the room, and

after many apologies for unintended intrusion, hoped that he would not be allowed to disturb the conversation ; he would be glad to wait till they were at leisure. But he had counted on a politeness he was not to receive. "I can't be disturbed at present, I am too busy ; and, besides, I must say I don't wish to be troubled about such things ; you have yourself to blame for the whole. I really wish you would not come in this way"—with a ring for the servant to conduct him out—was the only answer. The shadow of course retired. "Did I not know that face ?" asked the first visitor. "Is it not Mr. So-and-so, where you and I used to dine so splendidly ? He kept a magnificent table." "Yes," said the master of the house, "it is he, the fool. He spent all he had on grand feeds, and now he has to come to ask me for some old clothes. I can't be troubled with him. I always knew it would come to this." "But he said you had wished him to come ?" "Oh, yes ; but it's no use encouraging men of that stamp." The visitor had been too like the victim in thoughtless free-handedness, and the story struck him. He had till then spent as he gained, in much the same way. Taking a sovereign from his pocket, he laid it on the table, looked at it, and addressed it : "Sovereign, thou'rt the best friend C—— R—— has. I'll take better care of thee hereafter than I have done in the past." And from that day he began to save, dropped his summer friends, and without ceasing to be generous, ceased to think that to like his dinners meant to care for himself.

Had Shakspeare some such case in his thoughts when he wrote in "Timon:"

"Alas, good lord, a noble gentleman 'tis, if he would not keep so good a house. Many a time and often I have dined with him, and told him on't; and come again to supper to him, on purpose to have him spend less, and yet he would embrace no counsel, take no warning by my coming. Every man has his fault, and honesty (free-handedness) is his; I have told him on't, but I could never get him from it."*

Young men are often victimised by mean hearts who only care to use them, and then fling them away like a squeezed orange. They throw themselves in their way; pretend great interest in them; turn up morning and night, and flatter and follow. Wagg, in "Pendennis," is their representative. Beware of them. It may be money they seek, or some service, or to make you a tool. "I sought your acquaintance," said one of the class to me once, in my boyhood, "to get you to prepare my birds for me, for I heard you had taken lessons, and I thought I could save the cost of going to the stuffer's by knowing you." He was fool as well as sordid, you will say; and so he was, to my great advantage. But it is not always the net is thus openly shown. It was one of the thousand illustrations of Old Richard's story of the axe grinding. You will be everything while you are turning the grindstone, but when the edge is finished, your only thanks is to have your simplicity laughed at, if you be

* Act III., Scene 1.

not threatened to have it told how you wasted your time.

Some make acquaintanceships which you may think friendships simply because it suits them to fill up the hour with you. They want some one to speak to, and pass their time. While you think them so hearty they are simply indifferent, and note your weaknesses to turn them to jokes at you elsewhere. So long as it is their humour they will be hand and glove with you, but if anything happen that makes them think you may ask their help, or if they see you unfortunate, you are dropped in a moment. A mean man cannot make friends: his only care is for himself. Honour is not in his vocabulary, and affection means self preservation and benefit. Your bloodless people can never be trusted. You may fetch and carry for them if you like, or give them what you like, their only thought is how to serve or amuse themselves by you. Try their friendship by any strain, however slight, it is a rope of sand. They either have a design in letting you come about them, or they think they may find one some day. Their hearts, as Cowper says, are only muscles to keep up circulation. Time and constant intercourse make no difference; they are no closer at the end than at the beginning.

One word more on this. If you find any one making you his fag, he is not your friend.

3. Lord Bacon says: "There is little friendship in the world, and least of all between equals, which was wont to be magnified. That that is, is between

superior and inferior, whose fortunes may comprehend, the one the other.* There can, of course, be none among those in every point equal, or who think themselves so, for friendship must ever rest on supposed benefit to be gained, only, of a noble and worthy kind. Some considerations of mind, person, or character, must attract and be the occasion of the liking that follows, and love always looks on another as better than itself in that for which it loves. But I question if even so great an authority be right in thinking that they only whose fortunes are so unequal that that of the one includes or embraces that of the other, can have true friendship. Dependence is only compatible with friendship when it is balanced by some equivalent. If felt as such, it changes friendship to gratitude, not free from constraint. Some can do favours as if they received them: in that case, self-respect still fancies equality, but a follower and client can hardly rise to a friend. Experience and history, I apprehend, hardly justify looking to contrast of circumstances as most favourable to the closest attachments. As I think, companions either too high above, or too much beneath you, are undesirable. Some may be really too high for your good, except in some special cases, others think themselves so. Avoid both.† Too much money in

* Bacon's Essays: Of Followers and Friends.

† *Amicitia pares aut accipit, aut facit: ubi inæqualitas est, et alterius eminentia, alterius subjectio, ibi non tam amicitia, quam adulatio est.*—Jerome in Mich. Proph., c. vii. § 517, ed. Migne.

"Friendship either finds or makes equals: where there is in-

a friend, unless he be one in many, is apt to tempt you to keep on a footing with him. Nothing leads young men oftener wrong, than unwillingness to seem poor. They get into expenses they cannot stand; get in debt, and then, no one knows what may follow. As Byron says in his strong, sensible way: "Poverty means slavery, all the world over," unless, indeed, one be a Diogenes, to tell Alexander to keep out of the sunshine, as the only favour we ask of him, or, like Johnson, with independence that can throw given shoes out at the window, and wear old ones. A companion with more to spend than yourself, is likely either to make you feel your inferiority, or you will feel it of yourself, before long, and lose your manliness. You sink into a familiar, at the bidding of a patron, and too often come to think your degradation an honour. Whoever thinks himself entitled to patronize you is not fit for a friend. Never take up with one who makes you feel that he thinks himself condescending in owning you. Self-respect demands that distinctions of outward position be kept back, and, if there be any affection, they will instinctively be so. Among young men, indeed, there is less fear of such heartlessness, for as all boys are true democrats, a touch of nature still beautifies youth, and makes circumstances of less moment. College friends, often of very different rank, are not seldom none the less true. Their ingenuousness still looks at persons, quality, the one up, the other under, there is less friendship than flattery."

not accidents. Only do not affect society above you and strain yourself towards it. Noble natures are the same in any rank, and good birth or wealth have often as little pride as their opposites. Diogenes and Plato, opposite in position, were no less contrasted in spirit: the Cynic trod on the fine floor of his richer brother, as he was told by him, with more pride, than he did, himself, to whom it belonged. When it is sincere, meet friendship half way, if he who offers it be deserving; true-hearted care for you is too rare not to be cherished wherever you find it.

Affectation of superiority does not commonly trouble with friendships, for your very fine youth does not easily mix with the crowd. His dignity keeps him aloof, though like other spectral illusions it be invisible save to himself. He speaks little, except in circles worthy of the honour; bears himself uneasily elsewhere; is given to criticism, and is largely disliked. His assumptions go down with some; let them not do so with you.

Intellectual superiority, or superiority in knowledge, is a different thing from mere social difference. If there be sense and modesty with either, the more you have them in a companion the better. Intellectual wealth has a right to acknowledgment, and to render it this only honours you. A friend from whom you can learn nothing wants a main inducement to intimacy. He may make up for the defect by other endowments or graces, but bright parts or wide knowledge in a companion are equal pleasure and profit.

Let him know as much as he may, if he be simple and manly, his superiority will be an advantage, stimulating you to exertion to lessen the distance between you, and costing no loss of right self-respect. The more a man knows, the more humble he is likely to be, and the less he will thrust his acquirements offensively forward; for real, conscious knowledge, like the violet, hides beneath its own leaves, and lets its presence reveal itself only by the evidence it cannot conceal.

A companion too much below you is a mistake. To have a Tony Lumpkin for intimate is no great honour. Not that you should shun worth because it is poor, but lowness. Tony had a good fortune, for his mother says, "she thought he did not want much learning to spend fifteen hundred a year." That he concurred with her was shown in his comrades at the "Three Pigeons,"—"Dick Muggins, the exciseman; Jack Slang, the horse doctor; little Aminadab, that ground the music-box; and Tom Twist, that spun the pewter platter."* Never let yourself down: have no companions rather than bad ones. A poor scholar is as much a gentleman, if his mind be on a level with his calling, as if he had an estate; but the owner of a county, with the mind of a chuff or churl, is beneath you. What a man's father was is indifferent, if he were honest, and have transmitted no shame to his children. There is a peerage of poverty as much as of title—a peerage both intellectual and moral. Want

* Goldsmith's "She Stoops to Conquer."

of money is no disgrace, else we have to lament His to whom we all look ; the trouble is when the man is poor as well as his purse.* Refinement of mind, thirst for knowledge, sensibility, and high principle, are the grandest court robes. I know no finer type of young manhood than he, who, fired by a divine impulse, has consecrated himself to knowledge, and through many struggles, is true to his vow. The republic of letters and that of worth know no titles but their own. The gentleman is not an affair of clothes or purse. Descent, hereditary culture, the influence of conscious power that comes with gentle birth, are gifts of God ; but there are other gifts with which they can make alliance, where all these are wanting. But be sure you are not sentimental merely, and that you do not see qualities that do not exist, for companionship never levels up, where the inequality is essential, but always levels down.

4. Any sign of want of principle should make you draw back at once from intimacy or even acquaintance. Never think any instance too trifling. A chink lets in light enough to show what full day would do. A trifle is often the only test you can have, and shows rottenness as much as a speck of mould on ripe fruit. Rely on it, the wind may be judged by a feather. Dishonour of any kind ; a thought of dis-

* Non qui parum habet, sed qui plus cupit, pauper est.—
Seneca, *Epist.* ii.

"It is not he who has little, but he who wants more, that is a poor man."

honesty; any coquetting with a lie, if even with equivocation only; undutifulness in any relationships; wrong done, or even proposed, to employers; want of heart or conscience in any indication, however slight, where vanes that show the currents of the soul.

Cowper was right:

"I would not enter on my list of friends,
Though graced with polished manners and fine sense,
(Yet wanting sensibility)—the man
Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm."

To give pain for amusement, whether by a word or an act, argues moral defect; want of thought may by chance wound, but the regret that follows discovery atones for the error. Want of heart plays with feelings, and laughs at the pain it cannot comprehend. You might as well sow wheat on the soil over an Arctic ice-heap as friendship on such a nature.

5. Make no friend of one who does not meet your confidence half way. There is no friendship without mutual trust. Not that any one is to have all your thoughts, for frankness, even with a friend, has right limits. But there are some who only listen, and while you reveal yourself, keep permanently in the shade*

* *Humanitas vetat superbum esse adversus socios; vetat avarum, verbis, rebus, affectibus; comem se facilemque omnibus præstat; nullum alienum malum putat; bonum autem suum ideo maxime, quod alicui bono futurum est, amat.*—Seneca, *Epist. lxxx. iii.*

"True culture forbids pride among companions, forbids being niggard in words, or acts, or heart; holds itself free and ready to all; is indifferent to no one's troubles, but finds its own good, there, most, where it can advantage another."

themselves ; who worm out your secrets, but keep all their own ; who learn everything about you, but of whom you never know anything ; who deal in generalities on their side ; don't care enough for you, or don't trust you enough, to be unreserved ; perhaps have reasons for silence, not to their credit ; or if apparently open, show only how they can at once speak and say nothing. If you find yourself spending your time on a mystery, change him for one who respects you enough to drop masks and reticence, and give you the sight of his inner self. Crafty men are unfit for friends ; you are a mere pawn on their board. Some never rest till they look into your very soul, if they can, from a mere cold curiosity, or to gossip behind backs about you. Don't hang your heart upon your sleeve for such daws to peck at. Simplicity and cunning are no fair match. The cool, bloodless questioner, who puts you in the box hour by hour, is not worth your acquaintance, and may hurt you if you don't leave him. It may be pleasant enough to look out from a dark chamber into the light, but the opposite is very much the reverse.

6. Have nothing to do with one who jests at what you or others think sacred. To have no reverence is to want the higher manhood. A light mocker is a mere fribble in soul. Religion and religious men, serious and earnest, are far above any laughter. With the pale kingdoms so near, and the throne of God shining through the vast heavens, joking is quite out of place on such things. Life is entirely too solemn

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not to be grave. The centre of infinite mysteries, stretching away through the light by day, and shining down in star splendours by night, it is only manliness that we be thoughtful. With your awful isolation of consciousness,—borne on, as you feel yourself, by unseen forces, like wrack on the sea, or the sailing clouds—darkness your starting, darkness your goal—Day stooping to the west even now, and drawing brown night over all things—nothing becomes you so much as to fear God. All worship is sacred; for though there is a right both in object and mode, Error seeking the light in its poor ignorant ways, is high as the heavens above indifference. A sneer is of the pit, and idiot laughter is infinitely beneath the poorest psalm singing. Some young men, escaped from the constraints of boyhood, think to show manhood by a wild revolt from all they were wont to reverence. The Sabbath is turned to a holiday; public worship forsaken; all that religion attempts, to better mankind, met with a scoff; its ministers slandered; and its people set down as weaklings. Not that they would have themselves thought irreligious in all cases; they rather ignore the whole subject, as Louis XV. did death, which was not to be named in his presence. Avoid the whole class. Ungodliness is infectious; it is natural to us all, and needs only encouragement to grow rank. Respect for religion is the only fence that keeps evil from breaking down all that is good in us. It is an edge and border to our lives, without which they fray out and unravel. To fling off its

restraints goes far to break down all others. To mock or flout shows a coarseness and want of sensibility, on which no sanctions, however sacred, have any hold.

7. To make a companion of one who rejects Christianity, or wavers between it and the religious schemes of the day, is most unwise, however blameless the morals. Doubt and disbelief once sprung are well nigh ineradicable. Far better strengthen your trust than put it in peril. Respect sincerity, but remember that there is much more for revelation than against it. Some men of deep earnestness slide into a mere natural or philosophic religion from the turn of their studies, or from the tone of their Universities, or the influence of some thinker or author. The poetical temperament affects others, perhaps with a dash of these outside influences as well; the half-truths, or exaggerations, or extravagancies of orthodoxy, here and there, add their impulse, and, it may be, the idea of making one's own religion has a share. The end is, a vagueness which, like that of Alexander Severus, puts Apollonius and Orpheus alongside Jesus Christ, and reverences a gallery of heroes, of whom the Redeemer is one. A blind confusion pays equal honour to Plato, Pythagoras, Plotinus, Mahomet, our Lord, and Gotama Buddha, and puts the Zendavesta, the Vedas, the Koran, and the Bible on the same footing. It is very easy to be caught by the novelty and the apparent breadth of such teaching: set off, perhaps, by the charms in which genius presents it. You had

better keep out of its way. Mist may look well in the sun, but it is cold and dreary when over you. These eclectic religions are but a patchwork from faded wardrobes ; fashions old in their birthplace, vamped up for a new market. Some men, as Napoleon said of Duroc, will believe anything, provided it be not in the Bible. They take to Spiritualism, perhaps, or to table rappings, or to Emerson, but the Scriptures are only old Jew stars, burned out. Some praise the morality of the Bible, allow its literary merit in parts, but go no further. They may be men of high education, or of little ; may speak with the authority, in its sphere, of scientific attainments, or from the inspiration of leading articles ; in any case, religion is one of their open questions in which as much is uncertain as in any other. Before making alliance with such opinions, or yielding yourself to their influence, be sure that you have done yourself justice by being prepared. To undertake the defence of religion you need to have the sling and the pebbles, and to know how to use them. To be grounded in knowledge and principles is the condition of service or safety. Never make a friend of one who destroys your faith ; keep aloof : do not even defend it rashly ; study it first, till you feel its value and know its evidence. I am far from urging a weak fear, but it is rashness, not sense, to have your minds prejudiced before you let Revelation speak for itself. Truth shines by its own light, and needs only to discover itself to the ingenuous heart to be owned ; and this

it does in the Scriptures. The force of the internal evidence which the Bible offers to all who make it their study, is alone sufficient to turn off any number of cavils, and withstand any attacks.

8. The Model Companion is one whose character, formed by religion, shows equal reverence, Christian faith, amiability, and intelligence. Undeniable principle is not enough ; other qualities may make friendship impossible. Faults of temper or culture may leave respect, but prevent love. To be a Christian does not imply being a perfect one. Imprudence, dulness, irritability, vanity, or other blemishes, may be found even in those whom we cannot deny to be good at bottom. They may be unspeakably better than they were, and still not be very attractive. Old habits or defects may still show themselves. Cranberries taste sour after any sweetening.

But religion must be the foundation. To fear God is at the root of all true nobility of mind or practice. To be generous, amusing, quick, intelligent, weigh little, if the niche in the heart, for God, be empty. It is almost worse, indeed, when religiousness is a-wanting amidst much that is pleasant and kindly. It glosses over the fatal defect, and may make it be thought of no moment. Amiability and pure morals are, of course, so much religion themselves, but without frank loyalty to God in addition, they are only the virtues of heathenism, not of Christianity. Vague reverence, and natural worship, show a susceptibility for a more definite faith and homage, but are imperfect if either

be wanting. It is not enough to be Scipio, or Marcus Aurelius; what is needed is to be a Christian. Nor is it enough to appropriate Christian morality without acknowledgment, and take credit to ourselves for what is due to the New Testament. I mean by religion that which accepts Jesus Christ as the Saviour, and seeks to reproduce His image in daily life, alike in spirit and act.

Anything less must fail to secure a healthy influence of mind on mind. With a lower standard, nothing prevents mistakes or disastrous temptations, if expediency, impulse, or pleasure plead for them. In such a case there is nothing but our own will, in the last resort, to check or guide us. Education is arbitrary, public opinion varies, and natural conscience, even with the light borrowed from the Bible, may be clouded, when strong inducements appeal. We must become our own law, and our will is a servant oftener than a master. It is not the authority of parents, or forefathers, that teaches control, says St. Jerome, but that of God.*

To be a good son to the Father in Heaven is the only safety in him whom you make your Companion. There is no limit to the influence of mind on mind, in friendship, which, as the philosopher says, has but one soul in two bodies; and good is more readily tainted by evil than evil corrected by good. It was a saying of the Middle Ages, "If you go to Rome

* Non parentum aut majorum auctoritas, sed Dei, docebit imperium.

once you will see a bad man ; go again, you will make his acquaintance ; go the third time, you will bring him back with you ;" an anticipation, by some centuries, of Pope's well-known lines.* Poppy and mandragora, loathed at first, are soon indifferent, and, presently, craved ; and they say that the bird that once looks in the serpent's eyes, forthwith, helplessly flutters towards its jaws. Like arctic cold, evil influence, braved for a time, by and by numbs us, and brings on Death behind a veil of delightful dreams. If thus with vice, it is still more so with mere negations, toned down as they may be by much that is good or pleasant. The absence of the religious sentiment is soon forgotten or forgiven, and we sink to the same level.

A Christian young man will find no thorough enjoyment in the friendship of any one who is not himself a Christian. To have the same likings and dislikings, the same tastes and turns of mind, is at the bottom of heartiness ; without it, there will be disputes, or suppressions, and either cause want of sympathy. Friends must be twin roses, which hold each other up by twining as they grow. Difference on anything which occupies us much, even for the time, is fatal to friendships, for many are broken by mere passing heats ; how fatal, then, must it be when the opposition lies in the tenderest depths of the soul. To have our most sacred sympathies chilled by indifference or wounded by antipathy, makes

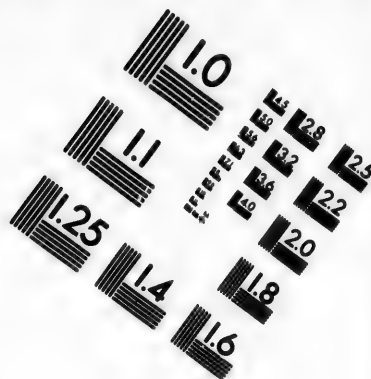
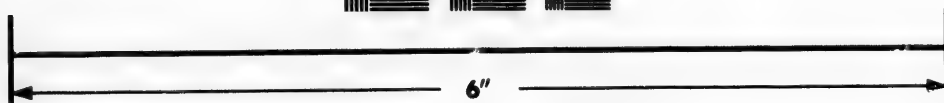
* "Vice is a monster," &c. Essay on Man. Epist. ii.

friendship impossible. Walking opposite ways, caring for opposite interests, differing in pleasures, regrets, and hopes, you may be together, but are never one. Sympathy is the golden bond of friendship. Our tastes, pursuits, and affections, are the paths of the spirit, and he who goes with us must have the same. Like the two lutes in a chamber, of which to touch a note on the one, as they say, makes the other murmur it back, two hearts, to be fit for friendship, must have common chords.

Still, with all, there needs care and wisdom. Even to a worthy friend it is not wise to tell everything, though, except in what must be secret, frankness and confidence are as delightful as they are profitable. It was good advice one gave his son, "Make companions of few, be intimate with one, deal justly with all, speak evil of none." If you find a friend, think none the worse of him that he is not a friend to your faults as well as yourself. "Every one who spares you is not your friend," says Augustine, "nor every one who smites you your enemy; it is better to love with fidelity than to deceive by good nature."* Nor must you forget that it is necessary to bear and forbear. Slight faults in a friend always have their counterpart in ourselves. There is no one who has not abate-ments. Give and require confidence; friendship leaks out of any breach in mutual trust and honour.

* Non omnis qui parcit, amicus est; nec omnis qui verberat, inimicus. Melius est cum severitate diligere, quam cum lenitate decipere.—Aug. Epist. xciii. 4.



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He who betrays you, whether from intention or weakness, shows a vital defect. To speak to a friend must be to speak to a second self. A blab or sieve, far less a traitor, is dangerous. "It is the solace of this life," says St. Ambrose, "to have one to whom you can open your heart, and tell your secrets; to win to yourself a faithful man, who will rejoice with you in sunshine, and weep in showers; it is easy and common to say, 'I am wholly thine,' but to find it true is as rare." *

* Amb. de Offic. lib. iii.

SUCCESS.

MORNING opens with painted clouds, and so does life. Many coloured dreams of the Future sail, slow moving, along the blue—romantic enough as a contrast to the reality when it comes. The far-off hills of our Happy Valley lie in the rosy light, hiding the roughness one day to be climbed, and sowing the earth with orient pearl. Change the figure; call Life a voyage; it comes to the same. We sail out of the quiet harbour of early years, streamers flying, yards dressed,—“Hope in the prow, and Pleasure at the helm;” but before we gain quiet waters again, what chances, changes, dangers, failures, anxieties, fears! Some, too light, turn over and sink with the first wind; some, wrong in the compass, or driven by a gale, drift on ruin, and perish; some go down battling bravely in the wild sea; some come back again, grey and weather-stained, but sails spread proudly, the light of home on all faces, deep laden with the wealth for which they have ventured so much and so far.

But Success is rightly to be expected, and waits our winning in far more cases than it is realised. The

Jessel or the seamanship is as often at fault as the weather, or the bad markets. There are, of course, clouds of rivals, but there always have been so, and some prize, at least, is open to most who deserve it. Even young Hope sometimes half fears as it looks the world in the face,—and wonders how it is to push its way through the crowd. But, *sursum corda*, lift up your hearts, there's room for every brave and wise worker in the constant shiftings, openings, and changes of life. Like a flock of birds on a bough, it may take time for all to get into their places, but it comes in the end.

But what is Success? You may win in one way and lose in another, and if the loss be the greater, the balance, after all, is on the wrong side. I take it that the only success worth the name is when a man gains a living, or a competence, or wealth, without paying too dear for it. You may buy gold too dear. If you give health for it you make a poor bargain, as John Leyden, among many others, so touchingly tells us; for what is money without the life to enjoy it. If you sell your faculties for it, and think of nothing but gaining it, you give pearls for a bauble, like a painted Indian; if you give your soul for it, your self-respect, your character, your conscience, your peace, your hope, or any one of them, if you *could* sell them singly, what will you think of the exchange when you come to feel what it means? True Success is when a fair share of this world does not cost either moral, or intellectual, or physical health or life.

One of the worst faults of human nature, in every age, is the worship of Success by itself, apart from the means used to get it. To be a "successful man" is enough, no matter what has preceded. Always believed, this doctrine has of late years been made a fifth gospel; if hardly owned, yet commonly acted on, as the general creed. With the spread of wealth the moral sense of the nation has become widely debauched. Our old ideas of right and wrong have largely changed places. From the gambling peer to the mechanic it is the same. Bad work, in some trades, is unblushingly defended;* though the name it goes by,—“scamping,” condemns it beforehand. Trades' Union rules are not, I fear, always a paraphrase of the Two Tables. Joint Stock Companies have no great reputation. With Houses, once great, selling a worn-out business as sound and good; railway capital, to over a hundred millions, yielding no dividend; with cooked accounts of directors and great contractors; bubble schemes in clouds; with hordes of desperate speculators afoot to advance their fortunes by any conspiracy or reckless venture—commercial conscience is in a poor way. If it were only men of no standing who thus turned swindlers, liars, or gamblers, it would be less terrible; the better tone of more responsible men might counteract the evil, in part. But it seems as if all the world were playing double or quits. There is universal distrust, till capital is left in the vault rather than be risked in

* See the Reports of the Trades' Union Commission.

any investment. Names have ceased to have weight to a sad extent, and reports and prospectuses smell of brimstone, like quarantine papers. Our commercial morals seem sinking. Our old name for honesty and fair trading is largely lost. Rogues in grain, gamblers in cotton, makers and vendors of lies in bales, barrels, and what not, hold up their face in the streets, and say Amen at church. Gain, instant and heavy, never mind conscience or character, is the rage of the day. Meetings of merchants deplore that pride in a name, or in mercantile honour, is often too weak to stand the temptation of a throw for fortune. Failure, they tell us, no longer brings shame and sorrow; the old scrupulous care to avoid it grows rarer and rarer; it is even part of a plan with too many, to break down when it suits, that they may build up a second, or even a third corrupt fortune, on the ruins of those who have trusted them. A gambler on the flags is condemned only if he fail; is shunned only till he make a fresh hit, and can feast and wine his friends as before. "Success" covers all, gilds villany, makes it respectable, gives it place and honour, and makes honest contempt a libel. But Success worth the having is not the mere making money; it is the keeping a fair name and clear conscience in doing it, and living for something better than gain. To lose self-respect for it, or that of those who still have old-fashioned notions of honour and worth, or to slave for money, is to put many a thorn in our pillow, and to wear a fool's cap and bells for the Devil.

But what are the requisites for this higher success? Let me give you some hints. ✓

1. There must be real Industry and Thrift: not that every one who is busy is wisely so. Many idlers are busy enough, and nearly all have disguises to cheat the world and themselves into the thought that they are not what their consciences, and the keen eyes of others may call them.

(1.) There is the Laboriously Idle man, always busy with what is nothing when done—your grown-up bubble blower; your human squirrel, driving his foolish wheel to find himself still at the bottom. Some of the class, with great duties, neglect them for laborious play; Nero, for instance, who let the throne of the world stand empty to strum his fiddle, and try prize poems and charioteering; or Domitian, great at fly-catching; or Louis XVI., tinkering locks when the state should have been on the anvil; or George IV., who gave what heart he had to the tailors. There is no end of worthless activities among the idle—no end of balancing feathers, or thrashing chaff, or bird-cage hopping. Male fancy-work is as abundant as female. The number of hobby-horses men ride has no end, from Dendermonde sieges, in Uncle Toby's back garden, to Siamese kite flying, or Laputan theories. Some of the tribe have definite aims; some potter on, with the air of grave occupation, at fresh trifles each day. Their life passes in self-imposed Sisyphus labours, rolling the barrel up hill to-day, to repeat the process to-morrow: or in as bad as the

soldier's punishment, of lifting bullets, from spot to spot, in a useless circle. But these are the graver varieties: it is far more common to find the industry only a bustling tumult, which occupies without wearying. Like Sober, in the "Idler," the day is filled, with most, by petty business and ingenicus disguises, to keep in their own favour, and hide idleness under worthless hurry and turbulence.

(2.) The Man who is always busy in other men's work or affairs, while neglecting his own, is another branch of the family. You will find him ready for anything you may need, and often when you don't want him, offering advice and assistance in all things alike. He is everywhere except in his own house, and leaves his own interests to take care of themselves while he haunts other men's places of business, or is deep with some one at the street corner. He often affects public affairs; is on the council, perhaps, or a great man at committees. He is everywhere but where he should be, and busy at everything that does not concern him. Steady work at his own calling he cannot endure; but the excitement of outside occupation; the delight of hearing his own voice, or of showing his knowledge or skill, and the pleasure of gossip, are his heart's food and clothing. He is often trying some side scheme for a time to indulge his dislike of steady application to any one thing, but after a wild beginning, the second iron is left to cool like the first. Serious, continuous work, is his abhorrence; he can, at most, make beginnings, or bend to

his calling in fits ; his mainspring is impulse or vanity. As a rule, he is busy abroad and idle at home.

(3.) The Downright Lazy Man, who does nothing he can any way help, but leaves things to go as they may ; who puts off to-day what will cost twice the labour to-morrow ; who lets chances go past him, rather than rouse and lay hold of them ; who has always an excuse for sloth—always a lion in every way ; who, if he must work, does as little as possible ; who talks longer about doing than it takes others to act ; who will never stand if he can sit, and whom nothing can hurry—is a drone whom nobody either respects or pities.

His life is a long study how to do nothing as if it were much. As Gibbon puts it of one of the class, "He well remembers he has a salary to receive, and only forgets he has a duty to perform." He is commonly as mean as he is shiftless ; willing to take without giving any equivalent ; toadies, that he may silence, or that he may gain apologists ; trusts to friends rather than to himself ; is never likely to be disqualified by enthusiasm for any position. Rather than seek work, if he need it, he waits on in hopes, like Micawber, of something turning up, or that death will befriend him by removing some relative, or he is just about to do something very soon. His quarters stretch out to hours, and he lazes through the day as if never rightly awake. Hints and contrasts are lost on him, and you might as well try to push forward a dial shadow. His life is all starts and failures, unrealised plans and promises, buds that

never ripen to fruit. He may begin with the brightest prospects, but he loses them one by one, and at each remove is lower, till he find some berth where a Sham can harbour and play out what life remains. Late at his office, if he have one, or at his business ; often away ; hearty only in idling ; he takes himself to companions of his own stamp when free, to while away the hours in dreary conversation, or he dozes at home. If he have a business, you know him by the look of his servants, for they catch his character ; by his stock, for he lets it get old and faded ; by the dust and dilapidation ; by the air of neglect and decay. If a servant, he keeps his place only from pity, or under protest in the mind of his masters against their own weakness, until they can bear it no longer.

(4.) The Man about Town is another variety. He is commonly easy in pocket, though appearances must not always be trusted, for many affect the character, with very little to back their pretensions. But they are rather his copies than anything more, and trade on his reputation for money, to make-believe they have it themselves. The race of adventurers is not extinct, though not so common or so successful, perhaps, as a rule, as in the days of Roderick Random. Students, with or without means, too often fall in love with the *rôle*, and young men of good family or of good education, whether richer or poorer, are not seldom caught by it. As it is expensive, if played well, money must be forthcoming, by gambling if not by any way better, or by sponging on those who have it. The days are

dragged out between the Parks and Pall Mall, or the Club, or some other lounge ; the evenings are given to the opera, the theatre, or society. Dress and dining fill up much of the time, and still more of the thoughts. The race are quite unconscious of earnestness in any direction ; their whole existence is a succession of light vacuities, stale jokes, and town gossip. Anything new is a providence, it gives them something to repeat. They read nothing, or worse. Their life is as hollow as it is unnatural. "Society"—its amusements, fashions, and patronage—is both earth and heaven to them.

(5.) The Jolly Fellow is still another of the great breed of idlers. Full of animal spirits, he cannot settle to honest plain-going industry. His thoughts run on playing much more than on working. When he should be busy he is planning a holiday, and when forced to stay at his task he is thinking how he can spend his next leisure, or how he has spent his last. He is a great authority in all sports, perhaps about horses, or, if he cannot aim so high, about dogs ; and no one can dress a fly better, or tell where the fish rise in more rivers. He is serious at all, apparently, only in seeking amusement. He sings a good song, or likes one dearly ; has any number of stories, and a loud laugh, and the taverns know him as one of their steadiest patrons, with his companions, o' nights. Most likely he is up in everything about racing, and he is a knowing hand with an oar. While young, his animal spirits suffice to yield the excitement he craves, but as he gets older he commonly takes to drink, and

from drink goes down, step by step, to disgrace and ruin.

(6.) Some sink to listless depression and helplessness through misfortune. Perhaps from inherent defects of character, perhaps from the misconduct of others, perhaps from the fluctuations of affairs, their prospects collapse, and, with them, whatever hope or energy they may have had passes for ever. They live thenceforward under the shadow of their calamity, hopeless, spiritless, broken. They have no future, and their past is only a mist, tinged here and there with faint prismatic colours,—wrecks of their hopes; broken rainbows of Long-ago. Their troubles have benumbed them, and left them a mere automatic life. I have known one of this class sink into a ghost of a man, silent, passive, except as a huge omnivorous reader, or busy at best only with his long hopeless affairs, as if Hope still soothed him by fond deceptions, unwilling to leave any living thing to despair. For the ordinary work of life he was simply incapable. Dickens paints one haunting the Law Courts, with his useless bundle of papers, year after year, tying, untying, reading, and folding the sad folios, almost mechanically. Pity is the one feeling for such human shadows; their fate, sadness incarnate; their animate death, a mere dream of darkness.

(7.) The Speculator is another type of the Idler, never wanting, but greatly increasing of late. He hates work, and avoids any legitimate path to success. His wits are his capital, and his only concern to make

money quickly. Feeling or principle are inconvenient weaknesses of which he knows nothing. He lives well, and spares himself no indulgence, let who will pay for his enjoyment. His money, lightly got, is thrown about with a royal lavishness, and he passes for rich till the crash comes, and then, woe to his creditors. It is a fine game for a time, but it does not pay in the end. Credit fails, his character is discovered, and he sinks out of sight.

(8.) A vulgar horror of commerce, in all its branches, is a fertile source of Idleness. Some young men are trained up with the idea that it is not genteel to engage in it. Situations in Government Offices, Banks, or great Companies, are the thing for a gentleman. They will hang on for a Custom House clerkship till they might have been in a far better position in a merchant's counting-house; and settle into servants for life, instead of rising to independence. The professions have great charms for some of this class. In their dislike of business or manual labour, they think they can make an easier living, and take a better position, in one of the liberal callings. They see that ignorance or incompetence have more chance in a profession than in commerce: that in the one a decorous sham has nothing to fear, while the other requires work and ability. You will know them by their utter want of enthusiasm. They idle while they are students, and throw their books on one side as soon as they pass.

To succeed in a worthy sense, retaining self-revo-

rence, Idleness must be abjured, and that the more as its approaches are often insidious. Some are born restless, active, and energetic; others slow and lethargic, but the mass are neither, at first, and may school themselves into useful industry, or insensibly fall into the opposite. Health, which is one great secret of success, is a gift of Industry, for the idle man is never so cheerful or well as the man who turns willingly to his work. Of course, overwork, or work without open air, injure or ruin it, but, in due measure, diligence is its condition. The pale student, or city clerk, would stand his work, and be fresh and vigorous, if the same justice were done to his body as to his calling: work and play rightly divided would keep him in healthy equipoise of muscle and brain. The sleep of the labouring man is sweet. Industry economises its leisure at evening or morning, and finds health while Idleness lies asleep. It is temperate, and uses its energies rightly, weakening them by no excesses: its eye is clear; its brain fresh; its spirits cheerful; its strength firm, and all ready to serve the vigorous will. Idleness is heavy, listless, absent; loses its chances by want of tone, and is good for little. We often hear of men who half kill themselves to gain a position: they would have gained it far more surely, and had enjoyment in their success, had they cared for their health. It is not industry, but its perversion, to be industrious foolishly. When Work thus violates nature, it forfeits much of its good, but, wisely used, it is the secret of vigour. Feebleness can do nothing

as well as health. The faculties fail with the bodily powers. Activity stimulates the young man to all that makes him strong—the exercise that braces the nerves, and makes the limbs alert; it seeks the early morning air, and finds an hour for recreation without touching on other duties. Even when pressed by too much confinement, it can make more of its chances than Idleness could of far greater.

There is no success, in common life, without Industry. To have the character for it is the passport to favour; and to practise it, gives, daily, additional power and worth. In the struggle for life on every side, laziness is left behind at the starting. Competition demands application and diligence, if we would not be beaten. Men stand too thick on the ground, and the strong outgrow the weak. Dutch shopkeeping will not do, now, even in Holland: the feather-bed and long pipe in the parlour, and lazy parley before getting up are a tradition. There are no Sleepy Hollows in modern commerce; hardly any in modern life. A little honey has to be gathered from many flowers. Industry saves the moments: acts with full knowledge; gives its heart to its work; keeps its eyes and ears open; is always rather too soon than too late. It meets opportunity as it comes: Idleness follows it. It is thoughtful of all that goes to its aim, and never misses through thinking on other things. It turns worthlessness into new wealth; and is quick at seeing improvements on existing uses. All that we see bears its mark, for civilization, in every

detail, is its creation. It is to Industry we owe it, that the world is not wild forests, or tangled morasses, or bleak moors. It has built our cities, drained our meadows, opened our landscapes to the sun, taught us to raise our harvests, given us our arts, our government, our laws, our science, and our commerce. Labour is the condition of all improvement. It takes the sour and worthless wild fruits of the woods, and cultivates them into luscious delights. It has given us Cunard steamers for ancient coracles, and creates, year by year, all the wealth of the world. It is the eternal law of the Universe. It is sacred and holy, and was proclaimed before the Commandments. It has even a wider range of obedience, for it binds the whole Universe, living and dead, matter and spirit; and God Himself works.

Genius, it is sometimes thought, can afford to be idle; but there could be no greater mistake. It cannot work without materials any more than lower abilities. The great names of the world were none of them Idlers. What years of patient study must Art spend before it gains its triumphs. There never was a great book that did not cost unspeakable labour. We think of Shakspeare as the ideal of spontaneous genius, but notice Ben Jonson's lines about him:

"For though the Poet's matter, Nature be,
His Art doth give the fashion. And, that he,
Who casts to write a living line, must sweat,
(Such as thine are) and strike the second heat
Upon the Muse's anvil; turn the same,
(And himself with it) that he thinks to frame;

Or, for the laurel, he may gain a scorn—
For a Good Poet's made, as well as born." *

Locke's Common-place Books are a lesson to all. Addison amassed three folios of materials before he began the "Spectator." Butler's wit, like Sheridan's, was less unpremeditated than elaborated from notes. Milton's learning was prodigious; and who does not wonder at the industry of men like Erasmus and Bayle. The fine gold that makes the crown of Intellect costs weary fires, and dark toils, and long minute working, before it reaches the brows that wear it. The God hidden in the sculptor's marble stands forth only as the reward of unwearied toil.

But Industry has much of the divine in it even without genius. It is so even in literature; Goldsmith bearing witness. "By a long habit of writing," says he, "one acquires a greatness of thinking, and a mastery of manner, which holiday writers, with ten times the genius, may vainly attempt to equal." In mechanical arts it is the same; imitation and skill go far to rival inspiration.

The Thrift that accompanies it is another element of success. The Idle are wasters, but Industry makes much of little; turns everything to account; and has few wants. Where Sloth would starve, it makes a garden; and what, without it, would be cast aside, it turns into wealth. It has the secret of true and yet not ignoble frugality, and fills its twelve baskets with fragments that Indolence would have neglected to

* Lines to the Memory of Shakspeare.

gather. It has made the barren North richer than the luxuriant South, and drawn the riches of all climes, in turn, to the desolate islands of Venice, the sea swamps of Holland, and the dull cities of England.

2. The Industry that prospers, must, however, be steady to a given object ; not fitful or easily daunted. Whatever it undertakes it must do heartily, as a pleasure, not as a task ; thoroughly, not with a failing zeal. Merely mechanical diligence is never enough ; we must give ourselves to our work. Devotion and loyalty to it are the conditions of improvement, and real advance ; without them we neither do it justice, nor ourselves. Many fail from divided attention ; trying too much, they lose all. Coke's motto :—"Non multa, sed multum,"—Not many things, but much,—is the true rule. Stick to your present sphere till another opens. It is excellent common sense to "Mind your business, or it will not mind you." Take a pride in your employment, whatever it be, and determine that you will excel in it. To look one way and row another may do on water, but not on land. Do one thing well rather than a number badly. To be unsettled and changeable is the ruin of many. They fly from fancy to fancy, and rest on none.

Still, be the master of your calling, and don't let it master you. Application and assiduity must not sink into slavery. It is the most foolish and the poorest of bargains, when a man gives his life for what he never lets himself enjoy. "I have a rich neighbour," says Isaac Walton, "who is always so busy that he has

no leisure to laugh ; the whole business of his life is to get money, and more money ; he is still drudging on, and says that Solomon says :—' The diligent hand maketh rich ;' and it is true indeed ; but he considers not that it is not in the power of riches to make a man happy ; or, as was wisely said by a man of great observation, ' that there be as many miseries beyond riches as on this side of them.' The keys that keep those riches hang often so heavily at the rich man's girdle, that they clog him with weary days and restless nights, even when others sleep quietly. We see but the outside of the rich man's happiness ; few consider him to be like the silkworm, that when she seems to play, is, at the very same time, spinning her own bowels, and consuming herself ; and this many rich men do, loading themselves with corroding cares, to keep what they have, probably, unconscionably got. Let us, therefore, be thankful for health and a competence ; and, above all, for a quiet conscience." Sell yourself to no Devil whatever. Be as active as you like ; study punctuality ; economise time, especially to noble uses ; it wastes fast ; its days and hours, more precious than the rubies about madam's neck, are flying over our heads like light clouds of a windy day, never to return. But never let mere worldly success engross you ; nor be a mere gnome working in any mine ; nor a slave of Mammon. Turn to the Fairie Queene : what weary swinking and sweltering there is in his dark cavern ! Perseverance does not need to mean having no thoughts above or apart from gain. Turn the key on

business when you go home o' nights, and come fresh to it next morning. There are crowds of volunteer convicts chained by their own greed to their desk, like slaves to the oar. Idolatry of money has unnoticed beginnings, and grows, at last, to soul atrophy, craving for ever, and for ever hungry. The Gods had an Olympian meaning when they gave Midas his prayer, that whatever he touched might turn into gold—and added, long ears.

3. There must be intelligence. Mere power is useless alone. Quick-witted Jacks always get the better of the slow-witted giants. Whatever the pursuit, inventiveness, adaptability, brightness, must direct and utilise our force; and a clear, wise, well-informed head must find markets or make them. Wooden nutmegs do find a sale, but it cannot be counted on. Merit gets its reward as a rule. In the keen struggle for life shrewd quickness is indispensable. In business, a man need not know many books, but he must know his trade and the world: he may be slow at an argument, but he must dart at a chance like a robin at a worm: he may be conservative outside, but in his calling he must shape himself to every occasion, and turn his head or his hands to each fresh inducement. Men often fail for want of readiness. They run in a groove, and have no idea how to get out of it. They want pliability and versatility. They are Ancient Egyptians, and think that the man born a clerk, or a shoemaker, must die one or the other. Take a lesson from the very Palms, the hardest and least accommo-

dating of all woods. In South American forests, rather than be shut out from the life-giving sun, they turn into creepers, and climb up the nearest trunk, till their branches get to the light, high overhead. Have your eyes open, and your wits awake ; learn all you can that will help you, and the world is your oyster to open and enjoy. Never be content to be always a servant, except in very special instances. It takes the manhood out of one to be resigned to dependence, and have no will but a master's. You get a helplessness, after a time, that cannot do, except as a subordinate ; like slaves, who slink back to their owners, unfit to be free.

Of course the more education you have, the better. A man in these days is sadly handicapped without schooling. But even if childhood and early youth have had little chance, intelligence will strive to make up its leeway rather than lose ; and the very effort will sharpen the faculties, and go far to ensure success. Opie's receipt for his painting is universally good—Mix the colours with brains. The commerce of England is not in the hands of scholars, but of clear-headed practical men, for the most part, who know their business, have their hearts in it, and know how to push it. Stupid men may happen to succeed, but, as a rule, they are luggers against ocean racers. Fixed modes and forms are well in their measure, but there are limits to red tape. Never stick to a thing simply because it is old ; never dismiss a proposal because it is novel. The more intelligent you are, the less likely

to be hide-bound by stupid conservatism ; the more liberal your education, if you be not above your business, the more chance of your making your mark. It takes scientific farming to raise wheat on sand, and modern business life is all sand till intelligence turn it to loam. Nor should we forget that the men who, in countless vast enterprises, have proved such incapable failures ; who have stained our name, and paralyzed credit, are largely commercial magnates. How much has it to do with their disastrous incompetence, that the education, and consequent largeness of view of these heroes is, as a rule, only that of the counting-house and the Exchange ?

4. Industry and Intelligence are two rounds on the ladder : Character is a third. I don't so much refer to principles : I have spoken of that kind of Character elsewhere. I mean the individuality, decision, and energy, which equally bear the name. The trouble with some is, that they have no character at all as to the manly virtues, or habits of mind, which tell on men and action. Harmless enough, perhaps ; they have no personality, no colour, no opinions, no self-reliance, no incisive vigour. Perfectly common-place, they are the train-bearers in the procession of life ; the lay figures of the world, of whom the portrait of one would serve for that of a thousand : ciphers of humanity, who need some true man to stand before them to give them value : neuters in the hive, whose worth is only negative ; human clay, for others to knead, and bake, and build into fortunes. They

don't know what manly strength of character means; pass and repass like shadows, and almost beg pardon for being alive; speak like women; sandwich their sentences with apologies, as if people cared for such trumpery; are overtaken by events while still irresolute; and let the tide ebb before they push weakly off. They never know their own minds, but, like Coleridge, debate with themselves the whole journey, which side of the road they will take, and, meanwhile, keep winding from one to the other, in their dilemma. Or they stop at each flower, and turn up each lane, instead of keeping a-head. Self-respect lies at the bottom of manly decision: a just and dignified self-esteem, which does not abase itself meanly before either things or men. Greed, also, has something to do with the want of it, for the ass between the two bundles of hay clearly fell a victim to the wish to have only the best, and there are a great many long-eared brethren, heirs of his troubles. Modesty is becoming, but it does not require you to have no opinions or choice, and follow each one by turns, like a lost dog. The meanness that cannot decide for fear of making a bad bargain, is costly in every sense. Firmness and decision, after due thought and inquiry, are inseparable from any conception of manliness. It is grand to be self-complete: to hear opinions, it may be, but to judge and act for oneself. Fair parts, with common shrewdness, and a knowledge of the point as well as an interest in it, are as likely to decide rightly, as a stranger. Advice

is generally a bow at a venture ; it may hit, but, seldom. We know so little of each other, that it is always to a more or less conjectural man, or of a more or less conjectural case, we speak, in the giving it. Weakness looks round : manliness looks within. In a difference between friends, it refuses to call in any third party, and insists that friendship and sound sense shall settle it. There is the cartilaginous character, which has nothing harder in it than gristle ; and there is a softening of the bones, which brings helplessness. The irresolute man defies definition, except as such : beyond that, like Hamlet's cloud, he is either a cloud, a whale, or a weasel, as you may fancy. You cannot count on him : He is valiant in advance, but unavailable when you need him, as you might expect of such a poor leaf in the air. Men without self-reliance are trees on sand, with roots every way, but no grip after all, the sport of the first wind. Self-reliance means other men looking to you ; the want of it, your looking to other men. A strong will draws men and things after it, as a boat does the drift in its wake. Decision and energy go together, but promptness is needed, as well. Some men are decided enough in the end, when they should have been so much earlier. Character of the true type for success is as energetic in its deliberation and decision as in the action that follows.

Don't mistake stupid Pride or Obstinacy for Healthy Decision. I knew a man who affected the commercial Mede or Persian, and broke his heart by keeping

on in a policy in the face of all warnings. Blindly self-confident, he had determined upon it, and would therefore continue it. Doggedness had once or twice paid him by a turn of the markets, but, this time, it killed him. Respect for others, and remembrance of our past mistakes, are needed as checks. So, with all qualities : we must balance and temper them, that none be in excess ; for, in Character, as in the body, one gross defect spoils all. Violent temper, or untruthfulness, or breaches of confidence, or morbid vanity, or want of common sense, or censoriousness, or mere lightness and want of solidity, may undo you. It is not enough to have good qualities : see that they be not neutralized by some prominent bad one. One bone in the mouth is more noticed than all the dinner besides. One nail in the shoe is enough. A young man often wonders how he does not get on, or should be disliked, while conscious of abilities, generous, affectionate, and the like, forgetting some fault that taints all his good, like a dead dog in a green lane. Poor Yorick is an immortal type of a failure in life, to a large extent, through one vice ; in his case, indiscretion. A clergyman, he gloried in pronouncing gravity to be a "mysterious carriage of the body, to cover the defects of the mind," and, like some of his cloth I have known, laughed himself into disfavour. For though men be ever so light themselves, they expect a fair measure of solidity from the gown and bands. "His life and whim and *gaieté de cœur*," so abundant, might be charming

in a circle fit to appreciate them or himself, but to the mass of the dull, the stiff, the hypocritical, the ill-natured, or heartless, they were only so much Greek fire thrown in mad play over his peace and prospects. "For with all this sail," says he,* "poor Yorick carried not one ounce of ballast; he was utterly unpractised in the world; and, at the age of twenty-six, knew just about as well how to steer his course in it as a romping unsuspecting girl of thirteen; so that, upon his first setting out, the brisk gale of his spirits, as you will imagine, ran him foul, ten times in a day, of somebody's tackling; and as the grave and more slow-paced were oftenest in his way—you may likewise imagine it was with such he had generally the ill-luck to get most entangled." His "wild way of talking" cost him "ten enemies for every joke," till at last neither innocence of heart nor integrity of conduct could stand up against the plots and malice of Revenge and Dislike. It is in Character as in intellect; the grandest is where no one quality overshadows the rest, but each is rounded into the other, and none are wanting.

Honesty in thought, expression, and deed, are essential to any success worth the name. In a young man, absolute truth and uprightness should rise to an instinct. Industry is, as a rule, associated with them: partly inspiring them; partly indicating the moral health of which they themselves are only additional signs. The Idle and the Industrious have, in their

* "Tristram Shandy," vol. i. 3.

idleness or diligence, the germs and index of all else. Industry, like health, makes all work smoothly ; one organ disordered affects the whole system. Life is like the air or the sea, which, stagnant, would soon corrupt ; it is the free breeze and the restless waters that are invigorating or bright.

Still, Industry and Honesty do not go always together ; but they need to do so to secure success. To an employer there must be the most loyal fidelity : his interests must be yours, and your character must be not only above crime but above suspicion. Let nothing tempt you to cross the sacred line of perfect integrity ; neither the smallness of the transgression ; intention to repay shortly ; the example or bidding of others ; the temptations of pleasure ; nor even the pressure of the keenest necessity. One lie in word or act opens the door to a thousand. Truth is the magician's circle, to cross which is to break the spell and turn all to darkness. One taint of suspicion is beyond all the gales of Paradise to sweeten again. Let your Honesty be a law of your being, honoured for its own sake, not for expediency, else seeming advantage may outway resolution. Be honest in your inmost thoughts : and not as to money alone, but as to all things—your time, attention, interest, and universal conscientiousness. "As to the Lord and not unto men," is the grand motto. Be above all eye service. A name for being thoroughly reliable opens many a door that has much within.

But stainless uprightness has two sides : to yourself

as well as a master. Never admit that it is right to do wrong, and never to it. There is a higher than any human authority: fear Him. Have only one morality in business, as out of it: stoop to no fetches, equivocations; white lies; evasions; impositions, or tricks. Hate all unvaracity as the gates of Hell. It is a grand story told of Adam Clarke when bid stretch short measure to make it enough—"I can't do it, Sir, my conscience won't allow me." His place might be lost for the time; but the world is large, and God owns it. Self-respect, and duty to the Highest, proclaim against your setting your foot inside the outermost edge of the kingdom of Lies, let the Devil promise you never so much.

The saying, that one cannot be honest and live, is as old as sin. You can't be dishonest and live, in any worthy or noble sense. To get a full purse and a dead conscience, is a poor exchange. It does not pay in the long run to have God against you. Rely on it, all shams, hypocrisies, wrong-doings, and lies, go to their father some day. It depends from whose mint your money comes, whether it is better to have or to want it. Everywhere, Honesty walks on firm ground: dishonesty among pitfalls. Character is the best capital in the end: the want of it brings contempt, and, commonly, even worldly ruin. The same business ability, energy, and value in what is offered, with Honesty, will always stand their ground against any schemes or deceptions. Distrust, like strong weeds, exhausts the soil at one seeding: a good name gets crop after crop.

Honesty is a sworn foe to Debt, and spends no more than it earns ; hardly all that. To owe is a millstone round many a young man's neck that drowns him in perdition after a time. Be manly enough to seem what you are, and while you by no means parade poverty, never hide it at the cost of uprightness. Make the very best appearance you can, honestly, but stop there. Pay as you go, and you will save many a headache. Be content to begin life at the beginning, and to wait, as others have done, till your income warrants indulgence, before taking it. Ambitious, reckless commencements are the ruin of thousands, bringing anxiety, overwork, debt ; draining business of capital, and living on creditors rather than gains. Young men, now-a-days, too often affect, at the outset, the style their fathers only reached after thrifty and patient years. They begin with the large end of the horn, and very often come out at the small one. Don't take Jonah's gourd for your pattern. Make it your moral.

Some men seem to think Meanness, both in youth and through life, a main help to success, but no mistake could be greater. The mean man is underhand, sneaks, listens, bribes, sweats, takes unfair advantages, has always some reservations, chaffers and haggles for a sixpence, promises and retracts, gives low wages, is suspicious of every one, is not to be trusted if a loophole be possible, rebates a poor man's price for a badly paid job ; pinches his house, perhaps, and watches his wife, if he have one, lest she be generous, or pass

his niggardly limits. Such a man is despised and hated, and knows it, for he rarely can meet your eyes, but looks every way while he is shuffling out whatever may save a direct answer. He seldom makes money, for his name gets abroad, and his first transaction is mostly his last, in any given direction. He has no friends; indeed he is as afraid to make them as he is incapable of attracting them. If he do make money, it brings him neither respect nor enjoyment.

The hard man is necessarily a mean man, but he may go even further. Woe to the wretch that falls into his power. He must get money, come how it may. But a curse comes with it. Generosity and tenderness are honoured and trusted; grinding heartlessness has risks greater often than its gains, and is used only by the desperate. Its profits are misery turned into coin. There is a mildew of public dislike over the man. Tales go rife of widows and orphans, and sinking men, done to death by him. His conscience is held to be either dead or haunted. No matter how moral he be, or how strictly he pay his debts, his name suggests execration. If he be a church-goer, the sight of him spoils the sermon. His money is by no means success, but most pitiable failure.

Manliness towards his own family is a mighty help to a young man. To be ashamed of their poverty, if they be poor, or to neglect them, brings its own punishment. The brave and frank acceptance of facts never dishonours: it is their attempted concealment that does so. Filial or paternal piety advances.

A young man's bearing the weight of a parent's age, giving back part of what he has so long received, commends itself as a mark of character. To spare a tax from a small salary, to pay a dead father's debts, or to help friendship or blood, is to cast our mites into Christ's treasury, which never gets a gift. He does not notice and repay a hundred fold. Moral worth weighs heavy even in counting-house scales.

Spirit and Enterprise are mainsprings of success. I do not mean rashness, nor stupid self-confidence, which blunder on without sense or rule, but the vigour and energy which take prudence and principle to counsel. Lifelessness can never prosper. Stagnant water corrupts; it is the quick dimpling stream that sparkles in the sun. Some men seem to think they have only to throw in their line and wait till success comes to them, and they sit expecting the nibble they never get. What of your bait, friend: what of your ground? Suppose you change both rather than dangle an idle hook for ever. If your neighbour fill his basket while yours has nothing, there's something wrong. The hook, or the bait, or the place, is faulty; perhaps you hold your lure too high for the fish you can catch; perhaps the worm is sunk in the ooze. Every fish has its fly, but even the right fly is not enough; you must play it nicely, at the right spot. You may frighten your trout, instead of tempting them. You may whip a horsepond for ever without doing much good, and find another whisk out his dozens in a bend where you could get nothing. Success is a

damsel that needs a deal of courting; crowds of wooers have made her saucy. If you sit on your stool amidst dusty packages, behind dirty windows, with antiquarian relics for stock, she will pass by to your rival. Faint heart never won this fair lady. Give yourself a fair chance. Too much modesty sinks to a weakness. As Lady Mary Wortley Montague used to say, If you wish to get on, you must do as you would to get in, through a crowd, to a gate all are equally anxious to reach. Hold your ground, and push hard. To stand still is to give up your hope. Not that you should venture beyond what is legitimate; to do so is simply to gamble with other men's money, but you must venture your own, to increase it. You don't need to turn speculator to avoid being behind. Only watch opportunities: use your head; study your business. Dryden says no man needs ever fear refusal, from any lady, if he only give his heart to the getting her: and, so with Success.

Still, be willing to Work and Wait. You may see others apparently rush into prosperity, while you jog quietly on; but looks are deceptive. Many a pretentious establishment envies an humbler one that dreads no collapse, and has funds at its banker's. Don't try to push Providence. To be safe is worth taking time. Even while under others, there is much in waiting your turn; not losing it, but letting it ripen. As a rule, he succeeds best, who, having chosen a calling, keeps in it, using every legitimate help to advancement, but avoiding change or unsettledness.

Having chosen a Calling, I say; much turns on that. Many a failure in life may be traced directly to the arbitrary choice of a career, by others, for a young man. To suit a parent or guardian's fancies, perhaps kind, perhaps wilful and stupid, many are sacrificed to pursuits for which they have no taste. In an ungenial occupation, life is spent in attempts at change, or in dispirited pining. How many abandon the employment on which the precious years of Youth have been wasted, before finally fixing their course in life. To have to plough down spring crops, and sow again for a harvest, is a calamity, to be, to the utmost, avoided. It is always hard to know what to do with ourselves in early youth: our inexperience; our indecision; our very position, leaving us often ill able to take the best course. It is a true and wise saying; one that throws more light on the principle that should guide us than any other I know,—“Our wishes are presentiments of our capabilities.” What a lad sighs to be, and strives towards, shows for what he is fittest. The liking is prompted by instinctive aptitude, and goes far towards securing success. Ferguson's wooden clock; Davy's laboratory at Penzance; Faraday's electric machine, made with a bottle; Brown of Haddington's working at Greek while a shepherd; John Leyden's turning the country church into a secret study, were hints of the future men. First love is commonly last love, as well, in pursuits, as in all things. D'Israeli's epigram has too much truth in it, that—“Youth is a blunder; manhood a struggle; old age a

regret ;" * and from no cause more frequently than a wrong start.

But Success, after all, does not depend, finally, on ourselves alone. There is a Providence that shapes our ends, rough hew them how we may. The seed and the soil, the ploughing and weeding, go far ; but the skies have their supreme, indispensable, part in the harvest. Man proposes, God disposes. We build the ship and spread the sail, but God sends the winds and rules the waves. All the light in the world comes, first or last, from the sun, and so do the colours of all things,—fields and flowers, and woods and clouds. To ignore Him who can give or withhold is a want of true manliness. It argues a vital defect to want religiousness ; a shallowness of character, and a low moral organization. Thistle-down globes, borne on the air ;—let us lean on it lovingly ; it is not to our credit to disown it.

Providence is not always on the side of the heaviest battalions after all. God counts something in His own world. Begin life in His fear ; He can bless a little, and disappoint great expectations, for the mildew is His, as well as the sun and the sweet rain. It tells even with men to be loyal to God. Thorough principle is above all sneers, and carries reverence with it, and confidence. It disarms suspicion, and clears us, when others are doubted. It fortifies us against what might otherwise betray us. Nothing develops good in us in every way, like it. Honesty and truth are

* "Coningsby."

never so pure and reliable as when they have their eyes on the Highest. Manliness never appears to so much advantage as when bravely religious. It knows no compromises, no abatements; custom and expediency are graven images to which it burns no incense. Temperance, self-control, kindness, industry, steadiness, and solidity, which are the great conditions of success, are natural to it.

As I began, let me end. Outside success is Birmingham jewellery, of which an old copper coal-scuttle and a sovereign can make, as they say, a thousand pounds' worth. To have lived well is better than to have made money. Face to face with Eternity, the great thing is to walk grandly towards it, by faithful work and Christian humility. If you gain wealth, gain it worthily, and use it becomingly; if only a living, sit in the sun, and thank God for His bounty. And remember, in all cares, distractions, and troubles, that as safety shone from the face of the North Star, on the slave caught in the tangled southern brake, or lost in the swamp, or bewildered in the silent woods, it shines to you only from the face of God.

CHRISTIANITY.

MAN, alone, of all the creatures, either manifests, or is capable of the Religious Sentiment. It was a just as well as thoughtful turn of Ovid, that we have been made to look towards heaven, while lower natures look downwards, to teach us the design of our being and our true glory above all Nature besides.* I have read that none of the humbler races have the muscle by which man turns his eye upwards, though I am not anatomist enough to be sure of the fact. Definitions by some single characteristic have been tried in all ages, from Plato's "two legged animal without feathers" to Carlyle's "tool-using race;" but it is at least a nobler formula, if, with some of the Fathers, we set down man's religiousness as his chief distinction from all other creatures. In the face of Comte, and Secularism, and of modern Pantheism, I question whether there be such a thing as an Atheist, or whether there has been; for whatever philosophy or indifference may hold in theory, nature breaks out, in all, at times. Seneca hit it for all ages when he says,—“They lie who say they can see no proof of

* *Os homini sublime dedit, cœlumque tueri
Jussit.*

the existence of God ; for though they may deny Him by day, they dread Him by night." *

The Hindoo has his three hundred millions of Gods ; the Negro his fetish ; the Indian his Great Spirit ; and even the most degraded tribes show some traces of worship, as degraded, perhaps, as themselves. Locke notwithstanding, it seems as if at least a rudimentary idea of the Divine were universal, if only like the bony plates that stand for eyes in the blind cave fishes, and mark the place of the original organ, long lost by disuse ; or like the broken gap in a ruin, shapeless and sad, that speaks of the traced window that once filled it. And as everything in us and around us has something to say for God, so have the relations of each grade of creatures to the others. The whole structure of Nature shows dependence and interconnected unity. From the lowest to the highest, each is linked to the other, leaving man above the whole, a contrast in his isolation, unless he can look up to the Heavens ;—alone—amidst conscious weakness which craves a strength we cannot find in any human help ; weakness that is the sport of the infinite forces of Nature, of the will of our fellows, and of the daily contingencies of life ; weakness, above all, that is overshadowed by the tyranny of evil. Our ignorance distracts and bewilders us, and cries out for light from above ; our sense of guilt anticipates danger and seeks to avert it, and our longing for a future life confides

* *Mentiuntur qui dicunt se non sentire Deum esse : nam etsi tibi affirmant interdiu, noctu tamen dubitant.*

in a Power that will secure it. In every age, among all races, rude or refined, the religious instinct is universal,—the supreme expression of hopes and fears, which spring, spontaneous, in every human bosom.

But it is not only reasonable that we should be religious, because Nature prompts : nothing so greatly dignifies and ennobles us. The higher the objects that engage our minds and hearts, the higher their tone and the greater the honour. We rise or sink as we fix our regards worthily or the reverse. Our affections are the mirror of our nature. Degraded, they reflect our degradation ; pure and refined, they reflect their own nobleness. And what we admire or choose, we even insensibly imitate, sinking progressively towards a low standard or rising towards a lofty. Our likings mark our moral affinities and develop them. We respect ourselves and are respected as we look above or below our own level in worth or intellect. Intercourse with goodness or genius both honours and raises us. Even mere outward dignity sheds a light on those in its circle ; we are the more in honour the nearer the king ; and if, with dignity, there be illustrious worth, intimacy is a certificate not only of rank but of character. What, then, shall I say of Religion ? It looks to the Highest ; the All Wise and All Good ; the Eternal Light that knows no shadow. If character be fixed by the standards we choose, what model is there like the All Perfect ? The mind, like the eye, catches the image of that on which it is turned. Our life is mainly the transcript of out-

ward impressions. We must have patterns and archetypes, and the higher and nobler, the more they raise us. But what ideal can ever rise, in the presence of the incommunicable name, as an object at once of reverend love and imitation? The divine character is the only unclouded perfection : the uncreated glory, of which all that is good or fair in the universe is but the reflected light. Religion proposes nothing less than the reproduction in the soul of as much as it can contain of the divine. It sets the throne of the eternal as the sun of the moral heavens, to which—

As to their fountain, other stars
Repairing, in their golden urns draw light ;—

light in all its beams, and many-coloured glory ; light that is the life and growth of the Spirit in all its faculties, as that of the sky is of all things in Nature. Darkness knows only death : where there is only the passing or borrowed beam, there may be leaves, but no more. The flower opens in its beauty only in the full sunshine, and the soul only in the full light of God ; that is, as it has most of pure and sincere religion.

Even intellectually, there is every motive to godliness. Life is made up of trifles, unworthy of more regard than is needed. Present interests want grandeur and loftiness ; and even science or thought, if they fall short of the spiritual, fail to stir or engage the depths of our being. Religion alone raises issues and contemplations fitting our highest powers. Physical

wants and gratifications are beneath more than incidental regard ; to seek refinement and culture in a mere abstract philosophy is not enough. The soul moves on a higher plane. Practical studies, however useful or beneficent, leave the higher aspirations unsatisfied. But to give our minds to the questions which religion suggests, is to be brought face to face with all that is grandest and most sublime in the Universe : the study of higher races as well as our own. Heaven and God, the soul and its destiny, are in its sphere. It is the Science of the Eternal. There are no heights nor depths it is not free, to its utmost, to explore ; no infinite splendours above, nor dark shadows of the abyss beneath. What is earthly, and dies with earth, can never compete with the spiritual and everlasting ; can never stir the depths of the soul so profoundly ; never rouse us so in our higher faculties. The plain cannot kindle the emotions which are spontaneous amidst the sublimities of nature ; the mean and the passing can never rival the noble and the enduring. In religion, everything is on a scale of unspeakable grandeur : this life, a mere point from which it looks abroad into the illimitable ; the interest, eternal ; the actors, Spirits ; the events, in keeping with the mysterious regions where they are transacted ; the principles, opposed,—good and evil, light and darkness, love and hate, truth and falsehood. There is nothing insignificant or evanescent ; all has its proportionate grandeur. Here, issues change, or are passing ; beyond, they only develope. The intel-

lect and the emotions that spring from earth are true to their origin: resting on frail and material objects, or linked with grosser passions, they want the spirituality of the Transcendental. The serene heights where Contemplation delights to wander, look down from afar on ephemeral hopes, ambitions, and cares of the world; their calm and clear air knows nothing of earthly grossness. The prospect from them sweeps round a boundless horizon, and shows visions of beauty unknown below. Literature and art owe all that is noblest in their creations to religion. They catch a different tone under its inspiration, and rise to new ideals. For Homer we have *Paradise Lost*; and for strength in Hercules, majesty in Jupiter, and physical beauty in Venus, we have the light of Christian graces, subliming, beyond them all, the modern painting or sculpture. There is nothing in antiquity like the faces of Faith, Hope, and Charity, or of saints and martyrs, as drawn by masters of Christian Art.* Genius has a wider and loftier range under Revelation than under Nature. Higher aims; purer standards; the earthly side of life contrasted to a divine and heavenly, have enlarged the spiritual universe and ennobled it, as science has the material. The skies are higher; the stars larger; and the secrets of the heavens better known, to the soul, as well as to the intellect. Religion does not ignore the humblest

* Yet I think I have seen something of the spiritual in some rare cases. That of the full length of Marcus Aurelius in the British Museum, for instance.

interest of the present, but it ennobles all by higher motives and loftier ends. Its contemplations will be the same hereafter as in this life, and will still be unexhausted after ages. There can be none grander even in the presence of God than those it meditates here. On merely intellectual grounds, then, we lose by neglecting it. The simplest mind must be expanded and raised, by daily converse with Eternity, beyond his who contents himself with the Present, in the measure by which the wide sweep of the Future is greater than the point that makes up this passing life.

The dignity of permitted communion with God, which religion implies, must needs raise him who enjoys it above all human distinctions. To wait even afar off on the Eternal Glorious King is the supreme honour of any creature. But much more is vouchsafed : they who do so in loving humility are "sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty."

But how are we to know which religion to choose of the many that offer? Why should we be Christians rather than anything else?

There are two ways of judging of any man : by what men say of him, or by what we ourselves find him ; and so with Religion. Outside, and themselves sufficient, stand miracles, prophecy, history, testimony, ready to give their evidence : within, there is the self-demonstration of moral goodness. I can only glance at either ; but I shall mainly speak of the second. A few sentences on the first, however, may be of some use.

With the metaphysical objections to miracles, as impossible, I have little concern. Still, it does seem venturesome for weakness and ignorance to limit omnipotence, or map out the paths in which alone it may travel. It does seem a rather heathen notion to make God sit a step below Fate on the throne of the Universe. To have Him supplanted throughout Nature, by His own laws, till, like the jumble of human enactments, they paralyze action, is to bind Him down by conditions in every footstep of His government. Rely on it, He who makes the laws of the Universe can so select, combine, contrast, and modulate any number of ten million laws, of which we know nothing, as to bring what notes He pleases from the great keyboard of Life or Nature. What we call laws are only stray glances, wide apart, beneath the surface of things, when all that is, pulses with mysterious force. Philosophy may see in them the wheels and springs that move the All; jacks wound up for ten thousand ages, to turn the Universe, with all its affairs, without the need of intelligence. The natural instincts of man, which are the inspiration of his Maker, think differently. Fate, controlling all things, but, itself, uncontrolled, is a stage property stolen from the old Stoics, and repainted by their modern imitators. Vague philosophies, with their auroral fires, show most in dark skies, and attract for the time more notice than the calm shining of the day. To owls, bats, and the like, they may even seem permanently preferable; but, on the whole, most

healthy judgments keep to the sun. Speculation is as delightful and flattering as it is dangerous. A new religion, or a new style of treating an old one, creates a fashion for the time. It lets us talk; gives us an air of inquiry and thoughtfulness, and lets us contrast ourselves favourably with those who content themselves with established views. But this capricious and light mood is quite out of place in religion. In spite of all the confidence of new apostles, there is a very just presumption against their authority. We know so little, and that so imperfectly, that caution and modesty urge the greatest care. Our logic limps; our ignorance joins irreconcilable premises; we proclaim old errors as new truths. In thought, as in dress, there is only a certain circle of possible change, and a thing becomes new by being sufficiently old to have fallen into disuse. We argue triumphantly when no one can contradict, and establish conclusions which a little more knowledge would overturn in a moment. Minnows may settle it that there are no tides in the ocean because there are none in their brook; but it is only because they are minnows. The Siamese emperor thought it an insult to his common sense to be told that water grows solid in Holland. Tides and ice were contrary to minnow and Siamese experience; violations of the laws of nature; miracles, in short; and, therefore, *à priori* impossible. Unfortunately, our Universe is only a shade larger than theirs, and our knowledge only a candle in the infinite dark. New laws—new to us, though old as matter—

are common as new stars ; not a few of them in direct contradiction to our previous conceptions. Our ignorance fools us on every hand. To a child or a peasant there is nothing but miracle : with a philosopher, while the fact continues the same, it gets a new name, and, with the name, is held to change its whole character. But the child or peasant may be most philosophical, after all. Nature's acolyte—the student—gets an irreverend familiarity with her, like priests with their images, and sees nothing divine in what others worship. He foolishly dreams he has got into her Holy of Holies, and, like Pompey, with that at Jerusalem, proclaims it empty. Miracles ! bah ! He knows the Natural Causes, and can do the same over again himself. But, after all, there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in our philosophy. Sometimes they touch our sphere like meteors and pass off again into higher regions, and then they are miracles : sometimes, as scientific discoveries, they unveil themselves to the world, and then they are only natural laws. Experience is every day enlarging, correcting former opinions, and dogmatizing afresh. Our pride and vanity are hopelessly given to map out the highways of Nature, and to limit her to these alone in her vast domains. As if we knew the thousand by-paths along which she may sport herself as she pleases !

A miracle must be treated by the same rules of evidence on which we receive anything else. To argue a thing impossible, in presence of trustworthy

proof that it happened, would be too much for the keenest logic or the most refined metaphysics. But men's brains do catch them in such very strange cobwebs. Logic and law settled it long ago that "a mother is not of kin to her own child,"* after "much dispassionate enquiry and jactitation of the arguments on all sides;" and metaphysics have delivered their opinion, in full court, be-wigged and solemn, that heaven and earth are only shams and apparitions, painted on the brain. Demonstrations beforehand that miracles are impossible have a dangerous family likeness to these portentous, philosophical, and juridical follies. Wisdom does, sometimes, nod.

In the case of the Gospel miracles, the number and character of the witnesses, men sober and calm, who speak of what they saw or heard, in a matter-of-fact way, very different from that of heated enthusiasts; the utter want of a motive to propagate an imposture; the impossibility of conceiving such men as St. John or St. Paul lending themselves to deception, and the equal impossibility of their being deceived as to what they themselves did, as well as saw done; weighs so heavily, that I can see no way of rejecting their evidence without disallowing testimony altogether. It is striking, moreover, that the early Fathers constantly speak of miraculous power as still seen in the churches of their own day. Justin Martyr, a philosopher, appeals for proof of the divinity of his faith to the power of casting out devils, of healing, and of prediction,

* Swinburne on Testaments, pl. 7, s. 8. Noticed by Sterne.

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shown by many of his fellow-believers.* Irenæus, in the same way, rests the claims of Christianity on the divine gifts still displayed in the Church. The supernatural endowments of the Apostles seem to have died away only by degrees in succeeding generations. Whether they were withdrawn, as having served their purpose, or from a fault on the human side, is an open question ; and so is that other—whether they do not, still, at times, show themselves, where men rise to anything like the simple earnestness of apostolic faith.†

The evidence from Prophecy I must leave to special treatises ; but, if one voice from heaven be enough, I think we could not have complained had it been the only messenger, without the array of witnesses we have, besides.

Still, these external proofs, however irrefragable, cannot be always available. They imply education, and reading, or the instruction of others : something outside the Bible itself, and not open to all. Historical facts, questions of argument and probability, discussions more or less abstract, are beyond many, and, where within reach, may be unsatisfactorily put, or may fail from the very idiosyncrasies of the enquirer. Wm. Pitt used to say, even of Butler's Analogy, that it raised more doubts in his mind than it settled ; and

* Apol. II. § 6. Dial. § 76, § 82, § 39. Irenæus II. c. xxxi. § 2. Justin lived from about A.D. 100 to A.D. 165. Irenæus from about A.D. 140 to about A.D. 202.

† See notices of modern miracles, so believed, in Bushnell's "Nature and the Supernatural."

there is a tendency in us all to think that what takes much defending is far towards indefensible. To find a sufficient evidence inside the Bible is, then, the great point: something within every one's mental grasp, requiring no scholarship, appealing to our own consciousness rather than to external facts; speaking the universal language of our moral instincts. The lonely settler, far off in the wilderness, has no means of knowing how prophecy has been fulfilled, or how Christianity made its way at first. The sailor, far off on the ocean, opens his chest at some rare moment of leisure, for the Bible his mother put in it, and reads that he who believes will be saved, but he who does not, will be condemned. On what ground can belief be asked? Either on none, or on some which he will find as he reads. If outside proof be indispensable, the Bible must be imperfect, and, instead of being supreme, must hold its authority from that by which its claims are established. A Bible, in that case, sent out by itself, would be simply a warrant without a signature: a commission without the seal. But there is no hint of such a state of things, in Scripture. It makes no allowance for ignorance; suggests no exceptional cases; but demands acceptance on its own merits. Not a word is said of supplementary proof to induce belief: it claims to carry the grounds of conviction with it. Its whole tone and language waive off any officious support. External proofs, it, as it were, says, "are well in their place—lamps, to guide to my gates; but, even without them, light fills my

temple, and streams out into the darkness, for truth shines with a heavenly brightness, and the Bible is her peculiar shrine." Scripture, in short, must be its own proof. To have to go outside for its warrant would be fatal.

In what does this inherent, universally patent evidence consist? Universally patent, that is, to the mind open to hear, for deafness must blame itself, not the summons that suffices for others. It must be something in the Bible that has its corroboration in our own consciousness, and, as such, can be nothing but the support of our moral sense and natural instincts. To feel a thing true is a higher security than any laboured argument: it endorses it with the assent of our inmost being. If, then, there be in man an echo of Christian truth, catching up its doctrines and counsels, and whispering them back as its own voice, there needs no more, for either peasant or prince. To have our own nature bear witness is as if God Himself had spoken, for the instincts within us are His creation. The truth written on the heart had the finger of the Almighty to trace it, as much as the tables on Sinai.

It was a favourite argument of the Fathers, when disputing with heathenism, that there was just such a concurrence between the Breast and the Book. They used to speak of the Testimony of the soul, naturally Christian,* urging that our religion was no new invention, but only the expression of the long pent up, inarticulate, voice of humanity. They were right.

* "Testimonium animæ naturaliter Christianæ."—Tertullian.

'The chimes lie slumbering in the bell till the stroke awakes them; and what is harsh clangour at hand comes back from distant echoes in sweet music. Christianity is the tongue that gives our wishes fitting voice; the soft return, in articulate clearness, from the Eternal Hills, of the wail of cries and prayers that rises, bewildering, round us.

The Bible doctrine of God is, I think, sufficient of itself to prove a divine source for the documents that embody it. Compared with either Pantheism or Heathenism, Jehovah alone meets the cravings of the human heart as to its God. The religions of the East have presented both in their most elaborate completeness, but neither satisfies the instinctive ideal of the breast. To confound the creature and the Creator, and deify nature by transfusing the Divinity inextricably through the vast fabric of the universe, turns Him into mere force and motion, impossible to realize as intelligence, or as in any sense a personal object of worship. Still more: it is, in fact, a deification of man himself as supremely divine; for if the living power astir through all things be God, then man shows most of it, by adding to mere vital energy the higher province of thought and will. The highest manifestation of God is thus human thought—and man is his own deity. This is Hegelianism and modern German Pantheism generally; the creed which Emerson openly preaches, and which, I fear, Carlyle, noble, true-hearted, and grand, as he is, endorses. You have it in part in the words of Vishnu, a member

of the Hindoo Triad. "The whole world is but a manifestation of Vishnu, who is identical with all things, and is to be regarded by the wise, as not differing from, but as the same as themselves." Emerson puts it,—*"I am nothing, I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me: I am part and parcel of God."* Hegel's formula is—*"Being and Thought are the same;"* and thus God is a process continually going on, but never accomplished; our thought and God are identical—and man is the highest manifestation of God. A doctrine of the Divinity which ends in finding no better God than man is a poor result of so much philosophy. To leap at the stars, and fasten in the mud, in such a way, does not commend itself.

Contrast this with the Scripture doctrine, and the infinite difference is apparent. Take any part, there is still the same All-wise, All-powerful Intelligence; no mere electric or magnetic current pervading all things, but a Being endowed with moral qualities, of which our own nature is a faint, because injured copy. There is no confounding Him with His works for a moment. Drawn in simpler metaphors in the earlier books, as was natural in the childhood of the race, there are still the same grand lines in the sublime ideal: the God of Abraham is the God of the New Testament: the same purity, justice, controlling authority, and tender Fatherhood, show in the one as in the other. The mighty, keystone truth, of the unity of the Godhead: that God is not only one, but the

Living God, is a gift from Abraham, through the Bible, to the race. In him the nations of the earth have already been blessed, in receiving this transcendent truth, for Judaism, Christianity, and Mahomedanism, which alone proclaim the Living, Personal God, are, all alike, sprung from "the friend of Jehovah;" and the Bible is the channel through which it has been conveyed. How is it that in Scripture only are we safe from the dreamy abstraction—the vague Nature God, of ancient and modern philosophy; and find, instead of this divine ether, pervading space, a Being to whom we can look as our great exemplar and loving Father?

The Gods of the various heathen mythologies stand no comparison with the God of the Bible. The Gods of the East and West, alike, are worse, in many ways, than their worshippers. Homer's Gods are only idealized, unearthly, immortal men, subject to nearly all our imperfections and passions, bound by the law of space, needing food and rest, hating and loving from mere caprice, often at variance among themselves, and kindling quarrels to embroil others. They marry and have children, and, in all respects, are only colossal men. The Greek priests were wont to throw the shadow of one of themselves on the cloud of the sacrifices, and proclaim it the form of a God: their whole Pantheon was nothing more: mere human shadows thrown on the clouds. The ignorant peasants of the Brocken—the crown of the Hartz mountains, in Saxony—sometimes see, at sunrise or

sunset, a gigantic spectre on the mists of the opposite hills, and tremble before what they think a supernatural terror, which, yet, is only their own form, thrown on the masses of morning or evening vapour, by the rising or sinking sun. Such were and are the Gods of Heathenism, in every country and age. David was a contemporary of Homer, and in the 139th Psalm, which the best authority ascribes to him, proclaims the attributes of the Jewish, who is also the Christian, God. He worships a Being, omnipresent, omniscient, all holy ; One who tries the thoughts, and guides the humble ; the only and ever living God. We, at this day, read his words as the perfect and lofty conception of a spiritual and personal God. Still, —after 3000 years, they reveal the sublime ideal, dwelling in light that is unapproached as unapproachable. There could be nothing more grandly exalted : nothing that commands more instinctive acceptance. How was it that the chief of a petty race, shut up in the hills of Judea ; of a people then without commerce, or adventure by sea or land, but plain shepherds and tillers of the ground ; with no schools of philosophy, and hardly a literature, for only a small part of even the Bible had then been written ; with no arts and less science, for the very Temple was the work of foreign skill ; how came it that he should be thus infinitely in advance of all mankind, besides, both then, and in all ages since, on this supreme question ? Compared even with Plato's conception of God—the highest outside the Bible—it rises, immea-

surably, into shadowy Alps of grandeur ; for Plato, while in some sense hinting at a Supreme Intelligence, binds it down by an outward Necessity, limits its power, and associates with it inferior created Gods, the makers of men. The Supreme Essence, with that great thinker,* is only a metaphysical abstraction, above the vulgar, and not to be part of their creed—a dim conception, vague and impersonal, with no contact with men, or practical bearing on life ; a mere Idea, rising in the brain of the philosopher, and, even with him, only a sublime speculation. For this cloudy and abstruse dream, moreover, he may have been indebted to Jewish sources, for he lived for years in Egypt, and doubtless had heard of the monotheism of the neighbouring Palestine. In Egypt itself, the primitive knowledge of this loftiest truth had long passed away, for Warburton's theory, that the esoteric teaching of the Egyptian priesthood included the divine unity, is long ago given up as without foundation. Egypt, indeed, like all the ancient world, had, for a time, traces of the first pure faith of mankind—winged seeds blown over the bounds of Paradise, and flowering awhile in the common soil of the world, but soon choked and lost in the thorns and thistles—but they had faded away. The winged circle had lost its meaning ; the Gods of Egypt had become a proverb of contempt. Of a personal, perfect, living, omnipotent God, the Friend and Father, as well as the Ruler of men, antiquity had no conception. The God of

* B. C. 429—347.

David is found only in the Bible. By what light was He revealed—by what but divine? The sun and God are seen only by their own beams. This sun-truth shines with no created light.

The doctrine of our Immortality is another gift of the Scriptures. Egypt taught it with wonderful clearness in her early history, but it gradually passed away as a living belief. Socrates and Plato had glimpses of it, but they want the confidence and clearness of revelation. There is an unspeakable fulness and definiteness in the announcements of Christ, compared to those of any other teacher. He brought life and immortality to light, and made them the creed of the world. He spoke with no faltering weakness, but with authority, so that his words have sunk into the heart of mankind for evermore. But for Him we should have been as dark as if the great secret had never been known. Egypt had lost it for ages: India and the East promised only absorption into the *Pleroma*, like a rain-drop into the sea; the transmigrations of Plato had fallen dead on the world; the Jews of the age of the Apocrypha mixed error with truth; the Pharisees of our Lord's day taught in many cases aright, but they wanted authority, and could never have formed the creed of mankind. In Rome, the mistress of the world and representative of heathen faith everywhere, belief in our immortality was virtually extinct. If Cicero anticipates it in rhetorical passages; the Chief Pontiff; the highest functionary of the State Religion, and chosen interpreter of divine

things to the national conscience—Julius Cæsar*—urges on the Senate to spare the lives of Catiline and his fellow conspirators, in a speech in which he told them, that “death is the release from all suffering, not suffering itself; death dissolves all the ills of mortality; beyond it is no place either for pain or pleasure. Wherefore,” says he, “keep these men alive to suffer a fitting penalty: after death there is no more punishment for sin, neither is there any reward for virtue.”† What would the future have been but for that clear light which Christ sheds over it? But, for this, also, we are indebted to the Bible.

The Scripture doctrine of Sin, and of our need of divine aid, in rising from it to a higher life, is one of those first truths that claim and receive acknowledgment as soon as stated. But it is found in the Bible alone, and may be searched for in vain, outside its pages, through all antiquity. In the old world, Sin was only a disease of the intellect—the fruit of ignorance, dulness, or want of intelligence. There was no such thing as guilt; no sin, in our sense; whatever any one did, however criminal, was, rather, a misfortune, a defect of mental power, an accident separable from the conception of the man himself. There is no word in Greek for the morally bad—for Sin: the expression for it is synonymous with physical evil. The Greek or Roman had three ways of thinking of what we call wrong: it was either declared innocent, or the guilt was transferred to the Gods, or it was irre-

* B. C. 63.

† Sallust, *Bell. Catil.* c. 51.

sistible. If he thanked the Gods for what good he received, he no less laid to their charge what evil he found in himself. Priests and people, alike, had no idea, in their ablutions and lustrations, of any thing more than the removal of a physical, not a moral stain: propitiatory rites, exactly observed, worked infallibly by a magical power, to secure whatever end they sought to obtain, though the heart remained, throughout, persistently set on evil. The assertion of Bayle that no Greek or Roman ever asked the Gods for virtue or other moral qualities, but only for victory, health, long life, and the blessings of fortune, is only the fact; for, though isolated expressions seem to speak in a different tone, they are opposed to the whole spirit of ancient opinion.* Before Christ, antiquity, outside the Bible, had no idea, nor even the slightest vestige of one, of what in the Spiritual system is called Sin. The taint of evil in our race, and the guilt of wrong acts, as wilful violations of divine law, involving responsibility, are truths for the knowledge of which we are indebted to Revelation. Ceremonial humiliation and penitence were reckoned virtues by the ancient world, but it took credit for all its goodness as due to itself alone. Seneca, one of the noblest and loftiest minds of antiquity, tells us that the wise man lives on a footing of equality with the Gods; for he is, really, God himself, bearing within him a part of the Deity. We are at the same time, he says, companions of God and His members. The good man differs from

* Cicero Nat. Deor. iii. 36.

† Epis. 59.

God only by duration : and God, though surpassing man in duration, yet, as concerns bliss, has no advantage of Him.* In one point, indeed, the wise man has even the better of God, since God is in His own nature already wise, while the man owes his wisdom to himself alone. As to fear of the Gods, no one in his sound senses can have it. They neither can nor will injure any one, and they are as little capable of receiving as of inflicting harm, and thus it is utterly impossible for man to offend them. Even prayer is of no use. Why lift up the hands to heaven ? Why trouble the Gods, when you are able to make yourself happy ? It is in your own hand to be company, on even terms, for the Gods, instead of appearing before them as suppliants.†

The mind, enlightened by the Bible, recoils from such haughty and monstrous pride ; such false independence of God ; such confidence in our own merits ; such boastful self-righteousness. It needs no argument to make us feel that such an attitude is as idle, as it is hurtful to our best interests. The modern Stoicism of our new Religionists meets little response ; it is contrary to the consciousness of mankind, quickened by the teaching of Scripture. We feel that we are prone to wrong ; that we need help from above to ennoble and purify us ; that we are free to do right, and stand condemned if we do evil ; that the sublime of our position in the Universe is when our darkness seeks the central light, and our waywardness bows before the throne of the Highest ; when we seek the

* De Provid. 1.

† Epis. 41.

grace and favour of God. Philosophy must yield to Scripture in this as in other things; in this, as in others, the teachings of Revelation are true to our nature; alone true, when the highest teaching, outside, is fatally wrong.

That the Bible should announce as the Ideal of Man no lower standard than the absolute and infinite perfection of the God it reveals, is another characteristic that shows its origin. Scripture knows no question as to the motive to virtue; no limitations of its requirements; nor any compromise with evil, however slight or specious. Even Socrates, the grandest man of antiquity, taught that virtue rests on knowledge, and that evil has its root only in ignorance, or in error. He had no Moral Ideal, to be sought for itself; that which, for the moment, is profitable, and the pleasure it brings, were the highest impulse he knew. Moral good, with him, was only the careful choice of what was most useful and pleasant. To make a mistake, and choose evil, was a foolish blunder, which better knowledge would have corrected. All antiquity, alike, was tainted in morals. Vices, nameless and disgusting, in Christian countries, find apologists in the whole literature of Paganism; were habitually practised by philosophers and moralists, and were attributed to the Gods themselves. Slavery, as the designed lot of all but the Greeks; exposure of children, and sodomy, were among the features of Plato's Republic. Aristotle recommends exposure of children, or making away with them, if weak; counts it a fault to pardon an injury,

and a mark of a high spirited man to be as thorough in hate as in liking. The idea of seeking the image of Him who is only light, without a shadow of darkness, never entered the mind of the race, except through the Scriptures, and yet we feel it to be the absolute and only possible truth. The infinite progression it opens hereafter, rises to the height of our cravings, and has a divinity all its own. Instead of Eastern absorption and loss of Being, an ever ascending perfection, and nearer likeness to God, is proclaimed as that for which we were created. Nature seeks no arguments to convince her that such a future is her true apotheosis, and that it bears with it the marks of a divine origin. To be a perfect Christian, it is felt, would make one a perfect man ; to reach the Christian heaven, would be to rise to the God-like.

The Foundation of Virtue, in the Bible theory, is enough, of itself, to vindicate its origin, as from above. It is not utility, nor pleasure, nor the will of superior power, but the essential nature of God, and is summed up, as to its living principle, in one word—Love. Christianity is nothing but the doctrine, that to love is to be blest ; that Loving is the only true Living. To give rather than receive is its central law :—to give to God, to man, to the creatures ; to think less each day, of Self, and find more delights in generous goodness. We cannot help feeling that, however hard, however high beyond us at present, this is the grand ideal—that self-forgetting love is the truest and deepest joy ;—love that floods the soul like golden light ; not

gross and sensual, but holy charity. We feel that to make happy is to be happy, in the highest sense ; that it is love that lives for others that makes a heaven, either here or above. We see it in all the holiest instances—in mothers, and sisters, and the great-souled amongst men ; in the angels, also ; and, even higher, in the ineffable joy of God, who, like His own sun, shines on all things with full ray, giving, but never receiving. A religion which finds its grandest triumph on a cross, on which Self-sacrifice rejoices to die, in its infinite love, fathoms the depths of our spirit, and is higher than human.

But the Love of Christianity has a double beauty, for, as it is painted in Scripture, while it has a boundless pity, it is still, like the sunlight, pure, on whatever it shines. It has no sully of evil even when turned on Guilt. It seeks even in its thoughts to be holy, like God, and its lasting regret is its failure to be so. Far from admitting the defects and stains of antiquity, it strives to avoid the very appearance of evil. But whence comes so lofty a scheme ? How does the Bible stand out in a light so wholly eclipsing all light besides ?

It was a famous saying of Cicero,* that Socrates brought philosophy from heaven to earth, introducing her to private houses, and public squares, and to the daily life of mankind. It might have been said with far greater force that Jesus Christ did so with Heavenly Love. He has changed the world, even

* Cic. Tusc. Disp. v. 4.

already, by the leaven He cast into the mass of humanity. It is to Him, first, we owe the grand idea of the brotherhood of the race, that rises, above patriotism, to a universal philanthropy. There had been flashes of the same great truth before His day, as when the statue of *Æsop* was raised in the market-place; or when the line of *Terence*, that "I am a man, and think nothing human indifferent to me," brought down the thundering applause of the theatre; and, even during His lifetime, when *Tiberius* sent relief to the ruined cities of proconsular Asia; but these were passing gleams in the thick darkness, lingering reflections from the long sunk light of Paradise. As a living creed, the brotherhood of man dates from its proclamation by Christ. Preached through the world, it was welcomed by some, scouted by most, and, for many generations, remained too grand and lofty to be realized even in thought. That it should be proposed to establish a universal religion was, indeed, one of the standing objections to Christianity, which condemned it as folly in the eyes of privilege and philosophy.* A foreigner and an enemy were synonymous in antiquity, and war or dependence were the only relations of neighbouring states. On this chaos—dark and waste—rose the light of the new gospel, to climb by slow ascent to a heavenly noon, in the end.

Such a principle, working only through the hearts of men, has no easy triumph over passion and imme-

* *Celsus*, quoted in *Neander's History*, i. 122.

morial prejudice, but its results have, from the first, been divine. Slavery, once universal and terrible, has, by slow degrees, withered away before it, until its last lingering traces stand shrunk and bare, like a blighted tree, ere long to fall and disappear for ever. In Europe, it has been extinct, in its worst forms, I might say for centuries ; for, though feudalism still kept its hold, in some countries of Western Europe, in class disabilities and wrongs, the tap-root of serfdom has long been cut. Negro slavery, the later form of involuntary service, has, in our own days, through the silent influence of Christian sentiment, been ended, in British possessions, at the price of an imperial ransom ; the fine paid by a noble race for their share in so great a guilt : in America, it has perished in the horrors of a civil war, of which it was the great cause. The serfdom of Russia has been abolished within these few years, and, everywhere, despotism is yielding its citadels, more or less willingly, to freedom. In every land the People are rising to manhood ; constitutional guarantees are everywhere the ramparts of liberty ; civil and religious equality ; education ; free interchange of commerce ; aspirations after general peace ; and the thousand ameliorations of humble life ; are the first golden ears of a fast-coming harvest. As the good Genius of the race, Christianity goes before Humanity, leading it, like a flock, to green pastures, and beside still waters.

The beneficent results of religion on Society, at large, may be seen very strikingly in the position of

women in modern life, compared with their position in antiquity. Vice still abounds, indeed, but it no longer enjoys an open reign. It wears a mask of decorum in public, and seeks darkness for its undisguised indulgence. Bad as things still are, public sentiment condemns grossness, and honours its opposite. Read Juvenal, or Tacitus, or Suetonius, and the change is from night to day, between their times and ours. The mists may still lie in the hollows, but long stretches of landscape, then hidden, now shine bright in the sun. Our moralists do not now palliate or defend shameful crime, nor can it be said of our modern philosophers, as it used to be of the ancient, that they must be indulged in impurities condemned in every one else. We have no statues of courtesans in our churches, as the national sanctuary at Delphi had of "Phryne:" thanks to the Bible, the moral tone is unspeakably purer and healthier. The Christian ideal of Woman is the highest philosophy as well as the grandest justice, for to raise the mother is to raise the race. We may fall below the standard, but it is still acknowledged. Home, with its purity, peace, and love, is a gift of Christianity; to it, alone, we owe those charms of wife, or mother, or daughter, which make it what it is.

Nor is the Amalthea's horn of Christian bounties yet exhausted. War has, from the first, been proscribed, as well as all that is cruel and fierce. Gladiators no longer fight for a public show; Christianity long ago put her veto on their bloody display; human

sacrifices, common over barbarous Europe, have long since ceased to shock mankind ; and, even in India, the suttee pile and infanticide are forbidden. War itself has been tamed of its fiercest horrors ; indiscriminate slaughter, tortures, deportation and slavery of prisoners, are things of the past, and the sentiment daily grows, that, except rarely, to engage in it, at all, is a crime, both of rulers and nations. The Missions of Christianity have, from the first, been a striking characteristic of its spirit. Other religions may have begun with the same zeal, but the first glow of activity has, in their case, given way to the feeble torpor of age ; but the missionary spirit which conquered Rome and Europe, is still as vigorous as in the first freshness of the Faith, and every spot is, at this moment, familiar to the footsteps of the wandering servant of the Cross. Everywhere, in all things, whether affecting nations or individuals, on the grandest scale and on the most humble, like one of the mighty forces of nature, Christianity is at work, by its wondrous, ethereal agency of unselfish love, bettering the world and the unit. What it has in store for the future is foreshadowed in the spring flowers already around us. It has made a different world, even if things were to stay as they are, and yet we are only in the opening flush of April borders. What the summer will be, in the long bright reign of immortal love, who can conceive ?

How is it that men like the authors of Scripture should have been able to leave all the philosophy and

culture of the world so far behind, and create a scheme so far beyond their highest conceptions? If supreme intellect failed, how was it that fishermen, and the like, have left us what is instinctively felt to be the very image of the inner soul? How came they to be able to lift the veil of Truth, and show us her divine features in all their beauty, as never seen by man before? If Christianity be a creation of their own, it is a greater miracle to conceive how such men could have imagined it, than it is to believe that they wrote under the guidance of the inspiring wisdom of Heaven. The character of Jesus Christ is, itself, enough to claim the Bible for God. It bears His sign-manual in every detail. As it stands in the Gospels and in the Epistles, it is unique and incomparable, and much more easily to be conceived as a transcript from a living reality than as a mere fiction; as that, especially, of so many independent writers, of so many temperaments, such various gifts, and often, defective training. There is a perfect naturalness and freedom in the various documents, which shows no trace of exaggeration or art: they are simple and unstrained, even when most above the plane of mere human life. Innocent as a child, and moved by the loftiest thoughts, He is painted with the same spotlessness to the last, and yet in no negative sense, like the mortifications of an ascetic, but in the midst of an active life, in which each day called out every varied emotion and impulse. He never hints at the need of repentance for Himself, though he makes it essential for all

besides ; but, in its place, He again and again claims a perfect faultlessness that sets Him above such a requirement. The best of men are deepest in their humility at the thought of their shortcomings ; but Christ, though unequalled for patient lowliness and sustained religiousness, claims that His life, so far from showing imperfections or sins, is a mirror reflecting the stainless image of God, as the unbroken pool gives back the shining round of the sun. His claims and pretensions are greater, in every direction, than could for a moment be urged by a mere man, without raising a horror at the blasphemous folly. He proclaims that He who has seen Him has seen the Father as well, and requires that all men should render equal honour to both. He gives Himself forth as greater than Solomon : as the way, the truth, and the Life ; as the light of the world ; the gate of Heaven ; the centre to which all men would one day be drawn. He claims power even beyond this present life, over the dead, who are to hear His voice and come forth to be judged at His throne. And yet we never feel the incongruity of such unparalleled claims ; they never strike us as anything unbecoming, but harmonize with the whole of His being, as fitting and natural. He has a divine patience, that bears every form of trouble—hunger and thirst, a homeless life, the taunts of enemies and betrayals of friends, craft and violence, meanness and pride ;—He moves amidst all, as the sun amidst clouds, emerging the same, as they pass, far below. He sets up a religion which

rests on self-sacrifice ; whose most vivid illustration is found in the grain that dies to bear ; while promising rest to the soul even here, He demands that it be found bearing a daily cross, as He bore, and fainted beneath, His own. Such a principle was opposed to all that ever had, or has, obtained among men ; it offered the highest joy, apparently by the surrender of all. In an age of local religions, and of unmatched exclusiveness and national hatreds, He announces a Faith for the whole race, which shall unite them in a common and equal brotherhood before their common Maker and Father. Himself the poorest of men, He bears Himself with a noble dignity that awes rulers ; and makes us forget the fact that He had grown up in the household of a Nazarene carpenter, by His kingly self-composure and perfect manhood. His teachings are as original as they are authoritative, embracing all that is grandest and most mysterious in time and eternity ; in the nature and wants of man ; and in the secrets of God, so far as they touch them. He draws aside the veil, with no faltering hand, from the future, and lights with a brightness all His own the darkness stretching over it, as no teacher has ever presumed to do in any country or age. And with all His loftiness there is no touch of the pride or arrogance of the Stoic, but a lowliness which attracts the humblest, as to their special friend. In a superstitious age, He has no superstition, but instinctively casts aside all human distortions and weak credulities. He is as broad in His charity as He is unbending in His spiritual

demands, for He welcomes those whom His nation rejects; puts aside narrowness, however enforced by custom; and in an age of universal ceremonialism, lays stress only on spiritual life. Unlike other teachers, the humblest understand Him, even when He speaks on matters the most sublime and mysterious, for He has none of the subtleties of the Rabbins; no tricks and perplexities of thought and manner; no abstractions or refinements; but, like the light, reveals by beams themselves invisible. As to morality, set him alongside even the noblest of common men, and the difference grows as we study it. Take Socrates, perhaps the flower of the ancient world, and he becomes a foil to the surpassing merits of Christ. We see him palliating the most revolting and unnatural lust, and confessing his own habitual proneness to yield to it.* He visits the courtesan, Theodota, once and again with his friends, and gives her counsels how to win and retain her lovers.† He speaks uncertainly always; confesses that, at the best, he only guesses and gropes in the dark, and dies discoursing in part on indifferent things, and ordering a cock to be offered to Esculapius. He was, indeed, a wonder in such an age, and had glimpses of a better than earthly wisdom, sent, I dare say, into his heart, as into the hearts of many illustrious heathens besides, from the throne of God; but, compared with Jesus Christ, he is a moon compared to the sun. All the light of ancient philosophy, to

* Xen. Mem. viii. 2.

† Xen. Mem. iii. 13.

use the figure of Coleridge, was little better, in the darkness of superstition and ignorance, resting on all things, than that of the lantern-fly of the tropics, moving in luminous specks, on the face of the night—mere gleams and points, of no avail in the gloom around ; but Christ shines with a steady and universal brightness. Human philosophy, like a stream through yielding banks, flows stained and coloured by the times in which it rises. But the teachings of Christ, like the river of God, clear as crystal, are unsullied by any polluting contact with His age or country. School after school has attempted to revive neglected systems of human masters, but all have failed : Christianity beckons us forward to-day as at first. In all other teachers men have recognised only instructors ; but Jesus Christ has been worshipped from the first as a God. The instinct of men has seen in Him no mere Jewish Rabbi, but the Son of the Highest. The heathenism of Greece and Rome, and their philosophies, have faded away like the parhelia—mock suns—of northern skies : Judaism, in spite of the good scattered here and there through the rubbish beds of the Talmud, has died out for eighteen centuries as a living power, except in its own nationality ; but Jesus Christ is extending His invisible kingdom in the hearts of all races, with each generation ; winning millions of subjects from every speech and country, and colour ; and indirectly affecting even communities most opposed to a rule so pure and lofty ; raising their morals, widening their sympathies, and shedding a softened light

through their public and private life. How can we account for such a phenomenon? It cannot be only because miracles are recorded of Him and His first followers, for they have long ceased, and they have been ascribed to many besides: it can be from nothing but the living power in His words and story. Meteors have their course, and burst into darkness; it is only the sun which shines the same over all ages. The conservatism natural to religious belief may give other Faiths a lingering hold in the area they gained while in vigour, but they stand like the stagnant and shrinking waters of some passing flood; not the bright flow of a steady stream. Other Faiths stand like girdled trees, monuments of decay, drooping and sickly. Christianity, like the tree of life, spreads its shadow with each passing century, and bears all kinds of fruits, and its leaves are healing. Its seeds, scattered in land after land, spring fresh and fair in every clime, with banyan groves from each single shoot. Most certainly Christianity is the religion of the future. Even now, it forms the public opinion of the ruling nations; its spirit is, insensibly, pervading the world. See how, for example, in India, it has called forth an attempt at reforming Hindooism; has shaken the whole system of Idol faiths, as the ground-swell of an earthquake shakes and rends their temples; and protests against the most sacred and long-established cruelties in their rites and worship. Buddh is a tradition; Mahomet has ceased to conquer; but Christ walks on the high places of the earth.

It is on such considerations, which might be indefinitely multiplied, that the faith of the Bible rests its claims. Some strike the intellect; other speak to the heart; the whole appeal, like the voice of a choir of angels, for acceptance by all, for their own sakes. I shall add only one more:—a light in which the Bible strikingly shows its divinity, and speaks, to the universal heart, as a revelation from God, with a force only second to that of the wondrous character of Christ. I mean, its power over the spirits of men in every age, and country, and in every rank, to animate, control, and sustain them, in every varied circumstance and need. It is the universal counsellor and friend of man. In joy and in sorrow; in poverty and in prosperity; in victory and in defeat; in health and in sickness; in solitude and in company; in thanksgiving and in prayer; in pride or in lowliness; in youth and in age; in living or in dying, it speaks a universal language of warning, comfort, and guidance. It has utterances for every emotion, and applicability to every case. It may be veiled and weakened by translations, made, sometimes, by men hardly equal to the task; sometimes at second-hand; but, still, it speaks as no book or man ever spoke besides. The story of separate chapters, or even verses, if it could be known, would be a record of surpassing interest. In the experience of every one, some texts shine like stars: as we think of personal trials they brightened; or deathbeds of friends they cheered. Every religious life borrows, thus, its own secret illumination, from year

to year : its own galaxies and bright particular stars, which have soothed disappointments, tempered calamities, and filled the mind with a calm and steadfast serenity in the darkest moments. Human compositions catch its power as they embody its spirit and repeats its words. Kings and peasants, philosophers and the illiterate, martyrs and confessors, have alike been cheered, inspired, and sustained by its wondrous words. It has created the loftiest poetry and the sublimest art the world ever knew, and a literature unique in its power and dignity. There is hardly a chapter that has not, perhaps, in some of its verses, kindled sentiments unknown to antiquity. There is a transcendent vigour and life in every page. A single verse made Anthony sell all that he had, and introduced, through his doing so, a new era in ecclesiastical history. At a single warning of the Epistles, Augustine's hard heart was melted under the fig-tree at Milan. A single chapter of Isaiah made a penitent believer of the profligate Rochester. A word to St. Peter has become the stronghold of the Papacy : a word of St. Paul has become the stronghold of Luther.*

Cromwell charged, at Dunbar, to the cry,—“Arise, O God, and let thine enemies be scattered ;” and Anthony drove away his temptations by the same appeal. Thomas Arnold murmured in dying,—“If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons ;”—and, “Blessed are they who have not seen, and, yet, have believed.” Selina,

* Stanley's Eastern Ch. lxxvi.

Countess of Huntingdon, died quoting Christ's words,—"I go to my Father." Lady Jane Grey wrote in the book of the Lieutenant of the Tower before her execution,—“The day of death is better than the day of birth.” Latimer, at the stake, roused his soul by the remembrance that “God is faithful, and will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able.” Luther died, crying,—“Into Thy hands I commit my spirit.” “The Psalter alone, by its manifold applications and uses in after times, is a vast palimpsest written over and over again, illuminated, illustrated, by every conceivable incident and emotion of men and of nations ; battles, wanderings, escapes, death-beds, obsequies of many ages and countries, rise, or may rise, to our view, as we read it.”* What shall we say of a book so many-tongued, so intensely human, so authoritatively divine ? Let critics and theorists stumble at words or phrases ; let some things remain to the end “hard to be understood ;” whose voice can it be but God's, which rises, still and holy, over the turmoil of life, in a thousand persuasions, commands, and promises, to warn us of danger, to guide us aright, and to soothe our infinite cares and sorrows ? It is a noble passage in which Augustine contrasts Antiquity and Scripture, and gives his fealty as a Christian man must—“In Cicero, and in Plato, and such writers,” says he, “I meet many things finely said, things that move the spirit ; but in none of them all do I find these words :—‘Come unto

* Stanley's Eastern Ch. lxxvi.

me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' " *

• Thomas Carlyle's words are a fit note:—"In the poorest cottage are Books,—is one Book, wherein for several thousands of years the spirit of man has found light and nourishment, and an interpreting response to whatever is deepest in him; wherein, still, to this day, for the eye that will look well, the mystery of existence reflects itself, if not resolved, yet revealed, and prophetically emblemed; if not to the satisfying of the outward sense, yet to the opening of the inward sense, which is the far grander result."

HELPS.

WHAT a chapter might be written on the Helps men have invented or accepted to make friends with the Unseen, here, and hereafter. Some from God ; some from the Pit—bribes to Dis to keep back the Fates ;—the divinest, too often corrupted and darkened ; not a few enough to wake infinite pity : all, utterances or creations of the same unspeakable fears and longings. The mystery of life ; the sense of lonely helplessness in surrounding immensity ; the clinging, immortal hope in an unseen Presence, that will one day shine through and save ; the instinct that will not believe the Universe has no Father ; the shadow of the pale kingdoms that are to receive us all ; the dread of something after death ; the yearning faith in Elysian Fields, beyond the dark mountains—combine to make man, everywhere, in some way, religious. Nothing that offers itself as from above or beneath, wants believers. There is no end of priests claiming to be the voice of God, and to hold His power of attorney to bless or curse—Bonzes, Talapoins, Brahmins, Medicine-Men, of all lands. Sacrifices, penances, charms, scapularies, images, have

their millions who trust in them. The whole creation groans, and cries out, in its poor sad ways, for God.

You, no doubt, pity darkness so gross, and rejoice that you walk in the light. You know the worthlessness of such poor, mock Jacob's ladders, and are thankful you know so much better. The helps on which you rely are very different. You have the Church, the sacraments, books, friends, examples, prayer, duties, self-denials, resolutions, all noble and elevating, and fitting aids to a pure spiritual religion.

Very good, my friend; and yet, what, after all, if the same principle lie at the bottom of your use of the best assistances, as, with others, at that of the worst? Clearly, it is not what we do so much as the spirit in which we do it, that gives it its value. In any religion, or rites, reliance on form and self vitiates all. Instead of grand realities, they become ghostly deceptions. The outward act must be the expression of inward life. Anything whatever is empty form without the sincerity that gives it its value; and is not an error in mode, through which you see the heart beating, better than greater correctness with indifference? Acts and words are but vanes to show how the wind sits in the soul; failing that, they are only mechanical, when not immoral. Outward service, in itself, has no weight; it is to offer rind for fruit on the altar. Duty, or self-denial, resolutions, or efforts, are slaves' tasks, apart from a right frame of mind. If to gain merit, or ground a claim, they leave the soul as poor as it was. The favour of God is given only to love and humility.

To bestow all our goods on the poor, or to let our body be burned for any motive lower than loving self-sacrifice, profits us nothing. The drop of cold water handed in Christian charity, counts more with the Highest than rivers of oil poured out to buy His smile. As nothing can help the eye, without sight ; or rouse, if there be no life ; worship or practice are of no worth without living religious affections. But, when, to use Scougal's fine phrase, which brought Whitefield peace, "the Life of God" is "in the Soul," helps are tendrils to lift our trailing thoughts and desires above the rank growths of the world, till they throw out their branches far up in the light.

First in the list, and indefinitely greater than any other, stands PRAYER. We may live near God when we cannot avail ourselves of some helps to holy living, but to give up this is spiritual death. Thus vital, it has been made everywhere possible. In the strife of tongues, as acceptably as in the congregation ; far from man, as well as in cities ; in our busiest moments, or in our leisure, we can always pray. Prayer is the breath of the Christian Life.

Some, of course, challenge even this first impulse of all religion. The advance of science is turned against it. The steadfastness and regularity of the laws of Nature prove it, they say, at once useless and unphilosophical. How can we expect, it is asked, that the system of the Universe shall be at every one's pleasure, to stop, or modify, or change, at a word ? The inexorable sequence of cause and effect ; the majestic processes of creation cannot be thus interrupted.

Does not the vast whole move on, serene, through all ages, bound by eternal laws in its least particles, as in the sweep of suns? Is there variableness or shadow of turning with the Almighty? Is not the very uncertainty of Natural Laws the condition of all human action? How, then, can it be either expedient or even becoming to pray?

A sufficient answer to all this, so far as I am concerned, whatever some philosophers think, is, that while they say men ought not, Christ says Men ought, to pray. I take it He knew more of the laws of the Universe, and of the counsels of God, than any modern professor, or scientific man, of whatever attainments. Many things in the present must rest on an authoritative word from above, or lie unsettled till we gain deeper insight hereafter. And I am quite willing to accept His for prayer. But it is never well to appear to shrink behind the shelter of any name. It is a greater honour to the truth to cast away any advantages and defend it on equal terms. Let me try to do so.

Difficulty, or apparent contradiction, are no reason for discrediting anything. Both are, not seldom, only in the mind that examines, not in the subject. Irreconcilable paradox and dilemma meet us on every side. What of the existence of evil in the Universe of a holy God? What of absolute foreknowledge and man's free will? There is a Providence, and yet we are responsible. Prayer is not the only matter in which darkness is mingled with light.

That men have always prayed, in all ages and coun-

tries, is strong reason why they should still continue to do so. Go where you please, you find some mode of addressing the higher powers, and it has been the same from the first. Is it wrong to say that the Race acts thus by a natural instinct; that prayer is the irresistible impulse, and law of our Being? Our physical nature has its own language, and so has our spiritual; both intuitive, both spontaneous promptings of something within. But, if this be so, prayer becomes the command of God, and a part of His plan in our moral economy; and to argue against Nature, and dispute what it demands, is poor philosophy. I question whether even those who, for the time, reason down their natural instincts, succeed in suppressing them in the end. The old truth breaks out again from the inner heart, when trouble seeks its theology from the heart instead of the head. As Seneca says of Atheists, that, though they deny God by day, they own Him by night,—objectors to prayer forget their creed when in extremity.

The constancy and unchangeableness of the laws of the Universe are admitted as readily by those who believe in prayer as by their opponents. But what are these laws? How many of them are known? The profoundest scientific man is little ahead of a child. Look up to where systems beyond systems,—the sun and its planets and moons drift through the Infinite, as thistle-downs through the still air. Laws of the Universe! What is the Universe? Pray tell us, you who make so free with it. Are you silent?

It is wise to be so. Thought comes back from its farthest flight, and folds its wings, wearied and blinded by the splendour, while yet on the very verge of the shoreless and bottomless All. A few fortunate guesses and surface reflections from all-surrounding mystery, make up the known. Yonder sweep ten thousand suns and systems, circle beyond circle, each distant from the other as ours from them,—round the pole of the Universe; and, still beyond, float countless galaxies, each filling a heaven of its own, but shrunk, to us, into faint telescopic light-clouds, in infinite perspective. Bounds wholly fail. From our highest scientific watch-tower we have only a poor contracted horizon on the bosom of the illimitable. For all we know, from the farthest nebula, irresolvable by us, there may stretch another Infinite, lighted by million suns, the glittering emperors of the starry kingdoms of innumerable skies. Know the Universe! O man, what dost thou know! Science, like a babe, stands lost amidst apparitions, appearances, and unknown forces, of the hidden meaning and essence of which it knows nothing. The conceivable, everywhere, and in all things, passes, presently, into the inconceivable. Where do we get beyond the phenomenon, to the thing itself? The Universe! It is little better to thee, O wisest man, than an illusion and shining dream. Canst thou decipher one of all its divine hieroglyphs? Whence came it? Whither is it tending? Has it opened like a flower, slow-blooming through Eternities, or did it break forth as thou seest it, over the Infinite, at a

word? What freight does it bear in those golden worlds? Silence is best. Come, join me, and bow the head and worship.

Prayer does not, for a moment, seek to suspend or violate any law. It does not ask that fire should not burn, or water drown, though, if God pleased, He could prevent such results from either. It rests upon a broader view of things than that of its opponents. Instead of a few laws, it falls back on thousands. Nature and Life are governed, not by the direct and simple action of any know forces, but by an endless combination of circumstance and contingency, a change in any detail of which wholly alters the issue. The least motion of the body brings into play thousands of muscles, and the least change in the course of things colours countless sequences. In the great kaleidoscope of Nature and Providence, the lightest touch varies everything. Every law has countless modifications by others. In seeking the causes of any results, the subtlest, that determined the whole, often escape us. In nature itself, we constantly find our insight at fault. The same analysis is shown from dissimilar substances. Influences wholly beyond detection change structural character and inherent properties. A myriad possibilities hover unseen over all things, and among these why not include the power of prayer? Why may it not be amongst the contingencies commissioned by God; one of the countless mysterious forces we are forced to own, though we cannot handle or weigh them? It is the same in the Moral government of the

world as in the physical. The delicate scales turn by a hair. The cry of an infant gave the Jews a Law-giver, and mankind Christianity. A bird lighting on a bough, at the mouth of a cave, turned aside the pursuers of Mahomet from his hiding-place, and left him to become the prophet of continents: a chance omen has often changed the whole current of history. There is nothing really small in the chain of cause and effect, and since we cannot see from end to end of it, in one case in a thousand, if we ever do so, at all, why may not prayer be an often recurring link? In a Universe of mystery, he is surely rash who would presume to exclude it.

What does it mean to speak of a settled order of things, which precludes change or modification? We find ourselves, every moment, moulding events and compelling Nature into new paths, which, but for our action, she would not have taken. She is our servant, not we her slaves. Can God be less free than man? Is He supreme, or, like Jupiter, controlled by Fate and iron Necessity? We can act on events: has He to submit to them? Even with us, results do not depend directly on physical laws. Mind is constantly combining and recombining them variously, at its pleasure. We cannot supersede or violate, but we can neutralize or develope them. What are new discoveries in practical science but adaptations to human use of hitherto unknown, or intractable natural laws? But, if man has this power, what shall we say of God!

Prayer is no scheme to dispense with work, nor to be enabled to disregard any known laws. On the contrary, it only seeks direction to aid in observing them. We sow that we may reap, and practise industry that we may succeed in life, and expect no freedom from these conditions. But both sowing and industry depend for their results on more than our acts. How much must concur to make either fruitful!

Take heart, then, friend, and go, pray. Both Bible and reason encourage you to do so freely. Your affairs cannot be too insignificant, for who can tell what may turn on them, and are not all things alike insignificant before the Eternal? If we pray at all, we had better keep nothing back. St. Paul's prayers embraced alike the highest and humblest petitions: the health of his friends; his being allowed to revisit them; the removal of the thorn in his flesh; the success of his ministry, or the spiritual growth of the Church.

Still, answers to prayer cannot always be what we expect. Ignorant of what is best for ourselves or others, we often ask what wisdom and love must refuse. All is determined for all, and the wide Universe is interdependent. What seems least may influence the whole, as a ripple spreads over the breadth of the ocean. God knows our wants better than we ourselves, and knows how they may be granted without injury to others. We must always pray conditionally. Even our Blessed Lord went no farther

than—"If it be possible." We often, unwittingly, ask a stone for bread, or a serpent for a fish. As our Father, we are to trust God with a child's faith and humility, feeling that his giving and withholding are alike for our good. St. Paul's entreaty, though thrice repeated, was still denied, and, in the end, he gloried in the infirmity he had deplored. Jonah's gourd is a lesson for all: the blessing, and the worm at the root of it, would often come to together, if we had our own will.

The great end of prayer is spiritual good; temporal benefits are hardly worth pressing. To have them does not necessarily bring happiness, and they change with the day. Apart from the certainty that we must often ask unwisely, and, often, what cannot be granted, our life here is so passing that its interests must needs be subordinate. Besides, to be always craving material favours is apt to foster mean thoughts, and make us selfish and mercenary in our relations to God. Nor are they in themselves much worth. If we had everything we could wish in the world we might still be wretched enough. True wealth and prosperity is that of the soul, not of circumstances. It is well to ask whatever we think we need, humbly, and in submission to higher wisdom, but only in its right place, and not too urgently. The far noblest good to ask is that we be brought nearer in spirit to the Divine, by loving, and humble, acquiescence, and oneness, with God's will, whatever it order. To be stayed on God would be perfect peace. Freed from

all anxious fretting; no more worn and burdened with endless cares; our weakness, blindness, folly, no longer striving to guide us, but committing all to Infinite Power, and Light, and Love, we should walk through life as little children with their hand in that of their Father. To feel that God is ordering all things for the best is to have Heaven. "Not my will, but Thine," calms every fear. Even He from whom we have all to learn, passed, thus, in His last agony, from petition to holy acquiescence, before the cloud broke, and His serene and holy peace returned. When He withdrew Himself, and fell upon His face, and prayed that, if it were possible, the cup might pass from Him, His trouble still remained. In His sore extremity, rising, He comes to His disciples, as if to seek even the poor aid of human sympathy, but only to return and renew His cry, with no better answer than before. Again, still in His agony, He seeks His friends. It was only when, after He had a third time withdrawn, and abandoning all request, only uttered His perfect resignation, His spirit rose calm and triumphant. His human will wholly merged in that of His Father, there was no longer even an outward struggle or reluctance. Absolute oneness with the eternal counsels had returned: He had again the secret of perfect peace, in having every thought and care lost in God, and could return to His disciples, no more to leave them, but to lead them out to see Him yield Himself to the awful sacrifice.* When we,

* Matt. xxvi. 39—46.

like Him, come to be able to abandon all thought of self, and have no will but the Father's, our souls, however troubled before, will pass into a perfect calm.

In such a frame, prayer rises into loving communion and adoration. Was our Lord always asking, do you think, when He spent whole nights in prayer? Surely not: they were, surely, rather given to holy rapture; the world lying below, hushed in the darkness, and the Godhead and He, alone, in the stillness. To let the mind dwell on God, in silent worship, is the sublime of prayer.

How or when to pray needs no hints where the heart is right. It would be to tell love how or when to express itself. Prayer in words is only one form: however the soul may speak, it is the act, not the manner, which is regarded. The frame of devotion suffices; and a tear, or sigh, an uplifted look, or a tender thought, is noted. Whatever love does is prayer. The heart speaks by many tongues, and all are known to God. A kind act, for His sake, as I take it, is as true prayer as any other. *Laborare est orare*—to work is to pray, and a whole Litany could not embody more than the widow's mites. A religious spirit is in some sense praying always, for its acts and emotions are alike consecrated by devotion. It is a harp from which every passing breath wakes sweet sounds. The full bowl of the fountain is always dropping. Fixed seasons or secret conveniences are not a necessity; the heart may be rising to God when there

seems least opportunity. Still, habit and system are of great advantage. The lamp in the temple never went out, but it was trimmed each morning and evening. To begin and close the day with special devotion is an instinct of natural piety. In the morning it seems a hem and border to each day's life, and in the evening it brings down the dew on the spirit, to wash off the stain and dust, and to feed and refresh.

Mere formal prayer, of course, is worth nothing. Still worse, it injures. That is not prayer at all that does not well up from the heart. At any time, we need not use many words. When the spirit feels most it can say least. The Publican could only utter one sentence for the Pharisee's many.

Need I add, that the name of Christ is the key of Heaven.

2. Habitual, reverend study of the Scriptures is indispensable to a healthy religiousness. There is no book so instinct with God as the Bible; none that speaks with such calm authority; none that so raises us into the presence of eternal realities. The Sacred Writers had, beyond all other men, a living sense of the spiritual and divine. They awaken conscience as none others do, and they keep it tender, by bringing it constantly to a standard that knows no compromise or hesitation. Nowhere else can we find one so lofty, so all-embracing, so searching. Like the sun, it shows motives otherwise hidden. It lights up abysses of evil within us, before unsuspected, and sets before us a perfect ideal of holiness. There is no walk of

virtue the Bible does not aid ; no forbidden path in which it does not set an Angel to warn us back. There are examples, counsels, promises, for all,—and the archetypal man—Christ Jesus—from whom to copy. Apart from all else, His presence gives it an unspeakable charm. Treating, in turn, of all that is highest, its separate words and phrases are weighty. Religion without a living study of it, is a blind superstition, instead of an intelligent faith ; it slights the guidance God has vouchsafed us, and follows its own whims and fancies.

How to make right use of our Bibles is the great point. To read as a task, or as if the mere words, understood or not, have some magic power, is to make it a dead idol. We must understand, if we would profit. What is needed to do so ?

The master key to the knowledge of Scripture is a deep sympathy with it. There is a divine faculty in the religious soul, apart from outward attachments, or intellectual power, which instinctively recognises spiritual truth. It may not know so much of the letter as it might, but it has an intuitive sense of the meaning beneath. It may not be able to reason, but it feels ; and no logic is truer than that of the breast. Luther's saying is golden : "*Pectus est, quod theologum facit* : " the heart makes the divine. Love, ever so humble, enters deeper into the mind of God than is possible to mere intellect. The strongest of all evidence is that of experience. The lowly spirit, feeling its wants, and seeing the Bible describe them just as

they are ; its need of help, and reading the Bible offers ; yearning for God, and finding His character, in all its relations, what conscience tells it they must be :—believes, amidst whatever simplicity, with a faith no knowledge could make more just or well-grounded.

But, while knowledge is not essential, it enlarges the mind and strengthens the convictions, where it is the servant of love, and humility. To get all the light God is willing to give us, from Revelation, is due to Him, to our fellow-men, and to ourselves. It honours Him as its Divine Author ; it establishes and enlightens us ; it tends, if kept in its right place, to a higher religious life ; and it enables us to vindicate the truth, when impugned.

There never was a time in which intelligent Biblical study was more imperative. There is much that is false and shallow abroad. Self-confident ignorance, or weak enthusiasm, turn to Revelation—not for humble practical counsel, but to work out theories, and set themselves forth as teachers. Seeking the results of knowledge without the use of the means, the only fruits are crude theories and brazen impostures. Pious vanity grows oracular over the sound of a text, and audacity sets up a sect or religion on detached and perverted passages. There is no end of theological maggots. Healthy theology is attacked in a thousand ways on the side of the warmest believers in Scripture, no less than from outside. Thoughtful intelligence, resting on adequate knowledge, is the antidote and specific.

But there are other characteristics of the day, which need both these, even more. There is everywhere intense religious activity. Strong reaction from prescriptive belief has led to a general freedom of inquiry in every direction. The grounds of every detail in received creeds are canvassed. Mere traditional sanction has no longer force. Nothing that will not stand the most searching tests of logic and criticism is accepted. Not only Christianity, but the Bible itself, have to bear the same scrutiny as in the first ages. They have to defend their very existence. Rude blasts shake the four corners of every doctrine and evidence, and assail the Canon of both the Old and New Testaments. I am very far from condemning the spirit that leads to this fearless demand for a fresh statement of truth, to meet the advances of thought and science. As Protestants, we should rather hail the independence and earnestness that seek to rest their assent on conviction. I, for one, would certainly never condemn any honest inquirer, either in secular or religious science, for stating any supposed discoveries. We honour truth, not by suppressing inquiry, but by courting it. An ounce of tried gold is worth a pound of what may prove dross in the crucible. Truth is immortal: its beams are the shining forth of the present God. A light frivolous spirit criticising religious opinion and fact in mere destructive hostility, is beneath regard; but reverent, humble investigation, stops with the human, and only brings the divine into grander relief. I have no fear either for the Bible

or the Cross.* That so many laymen are now enlightened students of Scripture, however far they push their inquiries, if they do so with modest and docile humility, is one of the most delightful facts of the day. The more they become so, the better; if only to keep the pulpit up to the mark. It can never be hoped, it should not be wished, that the age of implicit faith, and prescriptive awe can ever return. There is a universal demand for credentials, even from what has been most accredited. Everything is brought to the Lydian stone. Great names, traditional dogmas, ac-

* How little truth has to fear in the end from the most searching criticism, is finely shown in a sentence in the preface to De Wette's Commentary on Revelation, published just before his death. That such an intellect as his, illuminated by learning so vast, and of a freedom and fearlessness so unquestioned, found that all the mighty labours of his life, led back to the foot of the Cross, is a fact most significant. Hear the words of the Titan.

"This only I know, that there is salvation in no other name than in that of Jesus Christ, the Crucified, and that nothing loftier offers itself to Humanity than the God-manhood realised in Him, and the Kingdom of God which He founded—an Idea and Problem not yet rightly understood and incorporated into the Life, even of those, who, in other respects, justly rank as the most zealous and the warmest Christians."

"Nur das weiss Ich, dass in keinem andern Namen Heil ist als im Namen Jesu Christi des Gekreuzigten, und dass es für die Menschheit nichts Höheres giebt als die in Ihm verwirklichte Gottmenschheit und dass von Ihm gepflanzte Reich Gottes, eine Idee und Aufgabe, welche noch nicht recht erkannt und ins Leben eingeführt ist, auch von denen nicht, welche sonst mit Recht für die eifrigsten und wärmsten Christen gelten."—De Wette's Offenbarung, Vorwort.

cepted solutions, stand once more at the bar. The general mind has awaked to its supreme prerogative of private judgment. Moral earnestness, widely diffused, rightly holds that the noblest homage to religion is the acceptance of truth, whatever it teach. Science, clearly established, is no longer feared as an enemy, but hailed as the voice of God. The cry on all sides is for more light; and the feeling, that truth is divine, wherever found, and whatever its utterances. Instead of thinking our age light and sceptical, I think it grave and noble, beyond any before it. It is a dishonour to Providence to think we go back, or that the light is not steadily gathering, generation after generation. Truth never stands still; like the waves on the beach, if it glide back in appearance, it flows farther with each, present, return. I believe the day is slowly rising and spreading, and that the shadows we see are those of the retreating night. There never was less theory than at present, or more calm and laborious induction. Every step, like that of a Roman legion, is only made on a solid highway prepared in advance. There are few hasty generalizations. Years pass in the slow accumulation of facts. To adopt Milton's figure, it is as if the scattered parts of the lovely virgin, Truth, were being slowly gathered from the four winds, and remoulded, limb by limb, into her original immortal beauty. In science, in history, in criticism, in politics, in morals, and in religion, there is a manly and touching enthusiasm for a free, impartial, and thorough sifting of all claims or pretences.

Truth—moral, intellectual, or physical—is felt to be only the varied God. The same voice is acknowledged from the stony leaves of the rocks as from the tables of Sinai; and the words of Christ find their echo in the deepening thought of the race.

To keep pace with the times, and to establish yourself in a full and intelligent faith, study the Scriptures with your utmost zeal. You will find it of the greatest advantage to do so systematically, taking a whole Epistle or Gospel together, and thoroughly mastering it, verse by verse. Many helps are ready to your hand. If you read the Greek, there is no want of New Testaments, with all the information you need. If confined to English, you still have aids that leave little to be desired.* The more you know, the less fear you will be turned aside by any novelty. Ignorance, or superficial knowledge, is a prey to every new assertion; thorough acquaintance with Scripture, the best panoply faith can have.

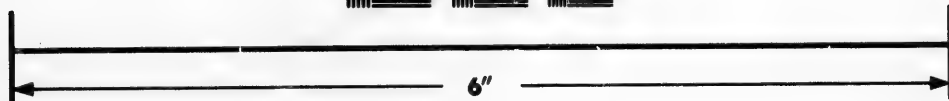
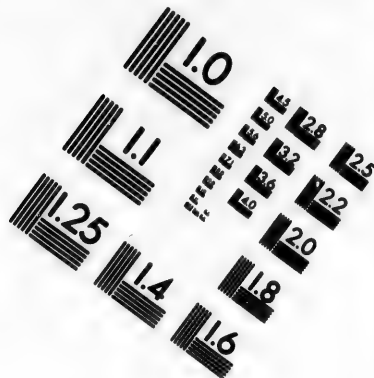
Still, don't forget that the head and the heart must go together. There are moral, as there are chemical, affinities. We attract and assimilate whatever has most of our sympathy. If you be in a healthy religious state, the truth, within, will at once lay hold of that presented. If not, there can, at the best, be only a rude suspension of creeds and dogmas in the

* The Greek Testament by Webster and Wilkinson; Dean Alford's New Testament for English Readers, and the Critical New Testament founded on Bengel, and published by Strahan, may be specially commended.

mind, kept aloft by outward impulse of education or habit, but sure to fall, like sand from water, as soon as these lose their power. Quickened religious sensibilities, Christian humility, and, above all, that frame that leads to prayer, are essential to our reading the Bible aright. To speak of Art to the indifferent, or of music where the ear is a-wanting, is not more idle than to study the words of Scripture, if there be no sympathy with its spirit. I am far from wishing you to look through any man's eyes, or to put any meaning on the sacred words, which they do not bear on their face ; I only wish you to read in a reverend temper, seeking the light from Him who alone can give it. Think as a Christian, loyal to your Master, feeling your need of help, and recognising the voice of God in that of Apostles and Prophets.

The Religious Life, like the intellectual or physical, needs WORK for its health, or even continuance. We know death by the still breast and the stopped pulse. The mind, ceasing to think, has already perished. It decays in proportion as it is torpid. Even in outward Nature, the condition of life is restless motion and change. Mighty forces agitate the whole Universe. The midnight heavens know no slumber, but move serene, through the blue depths unresting. Death itself, passes, everywhere, into new life : the corruption of to-day into the flowers of to-morrow. The great life ocean, rounding the farthest stars, is never still, but stirs, in ceaseless ebb and flow, for ever. All things are full of labour. It is the first law of universal





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Being ; the pulse throbbing through the great whole. Its empire reaches from the throne of God to the utmost circumference, over material and spiritual alike. Inaction is the negation of existence.

Religious Life is no exception to the all-embracing ordinance of work. It dies if it remain a theory. Not to apply our principles is to deny them ; and graces left idle presently droop. To slight our convictions is to destroy the very germs of faith and feeling. As, on the one hand, any man may make himself an Atheist speedily by breaking off his personal communion with God in Christ, so, if he keep this unimpaired, his religious earnestness must find an outlet in Christian work.

Praying and Working : we need both. Some have tried only the praying, but their religion soon showed morbid results. Monkish life, of the purely passive type, has been found a mistake in all ages. To seek to cherish a higher spirituality by a life spent in secluded devotion, has proved itself a violation of divine law, by constantly passing into spiritual disease. Sentiment alone, unsupported by habitual practice, becomes presently sickly. If the morals remain pure, the mind more or less succumbs. The constant introspection ; the unnatural straining after a uniform elevation of frame and feeling ; the neglect of the body, and the restless mental excitement of purely spiritual contemplation, affect the brain, till, as in the case of the Monks of the Desert, in the earlier centuries, and of many enthusiasts down to our own days,—

visions, awful combats with fiends, wild ecstatic raptures, and all the phenomena of mental excitement, run riot in the crazed fancy. The story of Antony, true man as he was, is one in its lessons with that of Simeon Stylites, or of the Grazing Monks, or of the Monks of La Trappe, at the present. We were never intended to seek Heaven by withdrawing from duty. We find it, both here and hereafter, in earnest, practical love of God and our neighbour; not in selfish care for ourselves alone. Reflection and quiet thought, like glades by the way, may cheer and refresh, but must not be made our rest. Love to God is proved and strengthened by being made practical. We love the more, the more we love. The good we do re-acts in ourselves, and we find, in our growing spiritual health, that it is always more blessed to give than to receive. We are sent into the world to make it better and happier, and in proportion as we do so, we make ourselves both. Our Christian graces are God's equipment of His true soldiers to fight, for Him, against the Devil and all his works. It does not so much matter what it be we specially do, if it be against the kingdom of darkness. All good is of God, and every form of good is religious, if religion inspire it. The world lies in the shadow of great darkness; any spark of light we kindle is from the sun. Turning the soul of a brother to God must ever be the first and greatest triumph; lighting up, in a hitherto dark and chaotic human spirit, the first rays of future immortal splendours; but all other earnest and valiant service

is also accepted and duly noted in the Book of Remembrance. There could be nothing less than the cup of cold water given to one of God's little ones, in the name of a disciple, yet it, too, glitters with his approving smile. Whatever is not wrong is right, in its due place and measure, and what is right may be made religious. The sympathies of enlightened Christianity bend over the whole horizon, like the tender blue of the sky. No human want or sorrow, nothing that can any way raise man, or help him to raise himself, is disowned. Evil, wherever found, is its natural enemy, with whom it will make no peace, on any pretext. Wherever the Devil shows himself, it follows, strong in God—whether he hide himself in politics, ignorance, pauperism, sanitary abuses, morals, or crime. Seeking first to bring back the supreme order that reigns in its own soul—the loving return of the heart to its Heavenly Father—it counts all lower order as a step towards it. Any way—every way, the True is of God—the False, of the Devil.

What each may do must be left to position and fitness. The rain, from the same cloud, makes of one stalk a rose, of another, a lily; each with its own characteristics; and the same grace of God, falling on different minds, makes men of different aptitudes. I know one young man, and some older men, whose lives are given to Christian philanthropy. They have leisure, and find a magnificent joy in unselfish devotion to the poor and wretched. But even occasional leisure may do much. How many are there who give their

one day of weekly freedom to Christian charity : teaching, or visiting, or relieving ? The Lord be with them, and remember them in that day ! Where there is a will, the way will never be wanting. Look round you ; there is plenty at your hand that needs you. Only, work. It is a cold world, and you cannot keep warm, except by constant activity. Make your whole life sacred by devoting it all to God. Remember—a religious spirit makes that Christian, which, without it, might seem indifferent. Specific acts cannot be prescribed for any one, but where the heart is right it will colour everything. There is religion in giving just measure, and full weight ; in selling only honest goods ; in conscientious diligence in your calling, whatever it be ; in active contentment even while you prepare for possible advancement ; in being good husbands, or sons, or fathers, or citizens, or neighbours. There is nothing good that is not, in its measure, godly. True Christianity does not mean a sluggish trickle of acts and moods, in a narrow channel of conventional prescriptions, with every-day life stretching, in banks of foul ooze, on each side ; it means, the whole breadth sparkling and flowing with living waters.

Besides work, there must be DEVOTION ; not private only : the sympathies of our nature, the honour of God, and the good of our fellows, demand a public confession. The temples and churches of all ages express a want instinctively and universally felt. It cannot be a mere weakness or superstition, or the effects of

education and custom, which speaks thus from every generation, but an impulse springing spontaneously from the depths of our Being. We depend, on every side, on each other; like trailing flowers that grow by interlacing. Absolute isolation would soon be death. Society is the universal confession that we are incomplete apart. In our physical wants, and our intellectual, we lean on all around us, and it is the same with our higher. It helps us to pray with more fervour to join in public services; there is a mysterious power in them that stimulates conscience, intellect, and imagination; all indeed, that helps us to realise the present or rise to the future. Gratitude to God is deepened when a multitude joins us in expressing it, as no less due from them all. Humility and regret are felt most, when the Amen that confesses our shortcomings is repeated by a whole congregation. Dependence on heavenly mercy is realised doubly when all around join in the cry for it. The glorious majesty of God rises more grandly to our thoughts when His praise goes up like the voice of many waters. Trust in Him, for the future, is strengthened, when a throng unite to declare it, and love to each other must surely be quickened when we kneel together before our common Father. To neglect public worship is to deprive ourselves of one of the greatest helps to a religious life.

I know it is sometimes said that, as things are, the quiet of the fields, or of our own home, does as much good as habitual attendance in God's house. Do you

think so, after what I have just urged? But, on other grounds also, rely on it, you mistake. I frankly doubt the healthiness of your religious feeling. Mere sentiment costs little, is very common, and often deceives. The poetry of Nature, the vague instincts of wonder and reverence; the elevating and calming influences of reflection, may quicken our sensibilities, and awe us into a natural devotion. But this is not religion; it is only an outward flash which may leave the soul, after it passes, with no loftier principles, or clearer convictions than before—mere passing colour, it may be, on cloud, or on barren rock. Godliness, is not a set of sensations, but the intelligent worship of a Father and Ruler, through Christ the Redeemer: it is not mere emotion, but a new life. The effect of the beautiful is a matter of æsthetics, not morals: an image impinged on the brain, not on the heart. A man may weep at a landscape, or a sunset, and yet show nothing lofty or pure in his daily practice. I do not deny that, in a healthy spiritual state, Nature, or quiet reflection, helps us to rise to God; but it is when the eye or the thought is already Christian. The heart right; self-confidence humbled; help sought; love felt to God as no less holy than pitiful; the glory of the landscape passes within and transfigures the soul. But he who can make such use of the fields, or he who is most in communion with his Maker at home, is he who oftenest worships in public. To join in the common devotions of men is the best aid to private devotion; and we learn best from

the spirit we catch in the articulate worship of our brethren, how to profit by the fainter voice of inanimate nature.

It is of no weight to urge that churches are not always what they should be, either in pulpit or pew. I wish they were perfect. But how much of the evil lies in your own fancy or prejudice? Granting that there is, too often, painful dulness, or wordy pretension, or dogmatic ignorance, or windy commonplace, in sermons, and of coldness or inattention, not to be wondered at, in the pews; the world is large, and there are many earnest intelligent preachers, and many devout congregations, after all. Go where you feel you get good. There is no need of starving on husks: turn to where there is bread. He who is of no use to you, may suit many others. Let nothing tempt you to worship where both head and heart are not profited, if you can get what you need elsewhere. Still, is it not possible that you may paint things too strongly? When we are disposed to see faults, we are apt to create them where they do not exist. Some eyes, like those of one of the spiders—the *Aranea Scenica*, if I remember—are little better than cloudy microscopes, at once magnifying and obscuring whatever they look upon. Very homely fare pleases when we are hungry. If you wish to worship God sincerely and humbly, and try to think as little as you can of any defects in the service, it will be a poor one indeed from which you will not get good.

It may be a great aid in keeping you faithful to the

public rites of worship, if you let your mind, now and then, dwell on the grand ideal the Church presents as a whole, in spite of the drawbacks in local details. Rise from the narrower view that gives pain, to a broader and grander. The Church of Christ, embracing all true believers, in all communions, and every land, is, after all, the living temple of God amongst men. In it, especially, He vouchsafes His presence ; and in its members, seen as a whole, we have the grandest image of ideal humanity. Say, that no one is perfect ; that many are very much the reverse ; still, looking abroad over the masses of worshippers, this grace offers in one, that in another, till, bringing all together, we form, from the whole, a divine conception of the image of God, restored to our race. And, if it be, as we know it is, that the good in Man is God's indwelling Spirit, who has changed him, so far, into His own perfection, we need only gather together the broken gleams, into a common centre, to have before us the awful glory of God, as He of old rested between the Cherubim. The Temple of the Christian Church is not a fabric of human hands, like that which has passed away ; it is a living miracle in the souls of men. Regarding it thus, we must honour the mystical shrine of the Godhead. We cannot turn our backs on that in which Christ still walks amidst the golden lamps. What though, here and there, man lowers and obscures the grand ideal ; it remains in itself the same. To think of the Church Universal will raise us to a loftier frame. What memorials of

gifts and mercies adorn its walls : what trophies of love and blessing ! Through Christianity have come to men all that dignifies and advances the race. Our laws, morals, culture, humanity, education, spiritual life, and the future of our world, to which we look through golden vistas of promise—are but the first of its gifts, and public worship is its outward acknowledgment.

What Books to read as a help to a religious life, is a difficult question : tastes, attainments, capacities, vary so much, that what please some are useless to others. I am sorry to think it, but I fear it is true, that our current religious literature is largely inferior. Sandy deserts of commonplace—morbid diaries ; vapid stories ; prophecy mongering ; essays on frames and feelings—dismal swamps—confused jungles of words—and book-making skimble-skamble—are too common, and, alas ! only too often popular. Still, there are many of a far higher class : clear, manly, intelligent utterances, or plain, unpretending, but useful expositions or counsels.

Of purely devotional books, as I might call them, it is even more hard to speak than of others. Lucid simplicity, and warmth, are the great things needed in a Manual of spiritual truth. It is well if we can have genius, but it is not indispensable. A modest essay, like James's "Guide to Anxious Inquirers," laboured perhaps in style, and without any brilliance, but earnest and practical, has proved its value through many years. The "Christian Year," and other Collec-

tions of Hymns, have, I doubt not, been of unspeakable good. Jeremy Taylor's "Holy Living and Dying," though too sacerdotal, and hardly fit for use as a whole, will live as long as the language. It suffers, like all his Works, by being overloaded with his rich fancies, and from its want of simplicity in composition and language. The "Imitation of Christ" is cast too much on the lines of mediæval thought to be much read in our day. Bunyan and Baxter come, perhaps, nearest the true conception of devotional writers. "The Pilgrim's Progress," in spite of its passages of too formal theology,* is one of the great books of the world, and is full of the richest and wisest teaching. It cannot be too often read, but should be studied again and again. Baxter's "Call," and his "Saints' Everlasting Rest," have a wonderful earnestness and force. It would be a great service to English readers if some of Luther's devotional pieces, selected judiciously, were accessible in our language: their manliness and strong sense, simple faith, lofty thought, and intense vitality, are the very medicine needed for our times. But, of all books to rouse and stimulate spiritual life, there seems to me none like Augustine's Confessions. Inspired by so lowly a reverence; instinct with such power of words; so sublime in its prayers and addresses to God; every sentence trembling with such earnest emotion; God so exalted; man so abased; the heart so laid bare; the affections

* As in the discourse on the four different kinds of Righteousness in Our Blessed Lord. "P. Progress," pt. 2, ch. 4.

so touched—it is, for ever, the living presence amongst us of one of the grandest intellects and noblest natures the Church has known.*

Biography, well written, is beyond question the richest of all general reading. "It is by nature the most universally profitable, universally pleasant of all things: especially Biography of distinguished individuals."†

Of Religious Biographies there are different classes: those of which that of Henry Martyn, or Brainerd, or Payson, or Mrs. Winslow, are examples, and those of a less mystical type. For my part, I could never make much of religious diaries: self-examinations and expressions of passing frames, are not to my taste. But thousands of worthy Christians prefer them to all other books of the kind, and find them of the greatest advantage.

The Lives of men of more thought and action, but often of equal devotion, who speak less of themselves, seem to me better reading. Dr. Arnold's Life, for instance, must always be very helpful to minds of a certain measure of culture. His letters abound in principles and suggestions of the highest value, and his whole life overflows with lessons of faithful work, and beautiful Christian spirit and wisdom. Whitefield's Life, by Philip, stirs the heart like a trumpet, and must quicken any reader to greater zeal. Mr.

* For English readers Dr. Pusey's Translation is, I think, the best.

† "Sartor Resartus," 45.

Stevenson's "Praying and Working" is a book of golden examples. But the grandest of all recent Lives, so far as I know, is that of Edward Irving, by Mrs. Oliphant. No wonder Carlyle said, that, take him all in all, he was the best man he ever knew or expected to know. By the side of his child-like humility, tender love, apostolic zeal, sublime fervour, unwavering faith in God, and grand communion with spiritual and eternal realities, ordinary Christians seem like another race.

It is not from the Biographies of men of any particular class exclusively, however, that you may get good. Lives of all true men teach much. We may differ with them on some things; but in many others we will be made wiser and better. Indiscriminate reading, whether of lives or other books, is unwise: for to study a Life, is to make its subject a companion, perhaps a teacher, and we need care in our choice of either. But, while avoiding light, vain, or pestilent men, dead or alive, there are Biographies which it would be narrow and weak to neglect, though we may not go with them entirely. Do not insist on having only men of one favourite type or school. Nature abhors uniformity; and in the region of thought it is simply impossible. No two peas or leaves are entirely alike, they say; far less any two minds. Some religious people are too apt, like the Egyptian priests, to require all their lions and sphinxes to be after one pattern. Profit by what is divine in any man, though you have to make objections at times, and to condemn

as well as approve. All the green in the world comes from the sun, and all the good from God. To denounce and repudiate men who seek truth no less than we, but see it in some things differently, is unworthy. We do not need to give up private judgment, because many of God's saints have been Romanists ; nor refuse to learn from the Lives of Schleiermacher, or Bunsen, or Robertson of Brighton, who, all, had so much that was nobly Christian, because they had some opinions which we dispute ; nor turn High Churchmen, from the Life of Jeremy Taylor ; nor lose the pleasure and profit of such Biographies as Schiller's, or Richter's, or of any wise and serious minds, because they went farther than we, or stopped short of us, in some matters. We can never be wholly at one with any thoughtful and truthful book or man. Individuality means contrast with others ; and, without it, there is little to learn from any one. Colourless lives are apt to leave us worse than they find us. Men strong of head and heart, or of heart rather than head, if there must be a choice, who have done good work in their day, give us part of their strength as we study them. Healthy principle, broad sympathies, a deep sense of duty, and earnest diligence in it, divine insight into truth, wise intelligence, and, above all, wherever it can be found, the loving recognition and service of Christ, are always and everywhere profitable, in any Lives.

In all such reading do not forget that the mere facts and outward frame of a Life are by no means of most significance. Try to get to the man himself, and read

his story by the light of his motives and aims. Not to understand him, is to misinterpret his whole story. A Life is the sum of a man's thoughts and purposes ; not the outward procession of act and incident. Failures, errors, enthusiasms, are often but misdirections of what is noblest ; blind strivings towards the highest ideals. Much in every one is the accident of education, age, opportunities, or temperament. You must strip off these masks to see the true Life. Try to look at things as he saw them who did them : to reproduce his circumstances, and re-live his life. How many great souls have been misunderstood ; looked at by owl's light of prejudice or ignorance, instead of by God's light of charity and intelligence ! The external facts of a Life are but the body, from which no one can judge the soul ; for unworthiness too often hides under the finest figure, leaving true manhood and worth with the mis-shapen. I speak, not of open and evident vice, but of all else in a career.

But it is quite impossible to limit or define the range of books from which a healthy mind will get good. There is a vital Chemistry in morals as in Nature, which extracts life and beauty from what is otherwise useless or worse. Not that I would encourage dangerous reading in any. Very much the reverse. But what is so to some, is what others demand. A strong swimmer is as safe in the blue water as in the shallow, but let him be sure he is what he thinks himself. To go after novelty from mere affectation of manliness, or to be in the fashion, is weak folly. There is always a

school, in every age, followed very much by young men, who slight whatever is old, in religion, as well as elsewhere ; and think everything new, oracular. Crude theories find crude disciples : and dogmatism has always charms for the ignorant and the mentally feeble. Hoist nobody's pennant rashly. The scientific method, so admirable in its place, is apt to turn religion into an intellectual process, and eliminate the spiritual element, which is its life. Beware of the divorce of the head from the heart. Before you turn philosopher, be a Christian, and as your principles and convictions deepen you will feel free for outside inquiries. To begin otherwise is to prejudice the mind against spiritual truth, for the tendency of all scientific pursuits, natural or theological, when the religious faculty has not been trained and developed beforehand, is apt to be towards some form of materialism, or nebulous doubt. There is nothing between us and blank Pyrrhonism, if we have not the safeguard of a well-grounded faith. Loving communion with God in Christ will carry you unharmed anywhere. "If a man keep this unimpaired," says Dr. Arnold, "I believe that no intellectual study, whether of nature or man, will force him into Atheism ; but, on the contrary, the new creations of our knowledge, so to speak, gather themselves into a fair and harmonious system, ever revolving in their own brightness round their proper centre, the Throne of God."* Mere speculation, on whatever

* Dr. Arnold's Life. By Dean Stanley.

points, is not religion. It may be useful, if only to secure a thorough investigation of facts and opinions, but as to our spiritual life, if alone, it is the flapping of a loose sail, keeping us back rather than helping us. Cold, critical books are the surgeon's knife on the dead body of Religion, which misses the soul ;—barren fig trees, with nothing but leaves. An educated man must, of course, read in many directions, and cannot always have the faith and warmth in his authors he might desire, but if they want them, let him supply both. Still, it is not good, in any way, to engross ourselves too much with the merely intellectual in religion : the heart is the man, not the brain, and if intellect be clear, it is cold. Take care of the fatal drowse that comes with too long exposure in such air. Turn back, ever and anon, to something better. The simplest and humblest Manual that breathes deep religious feeling ; the plainest Life of a true child of God, or a few verses of Scripture, will do you more good than any scientific treatise. The best way to settle any doubts is to turn from theories about details, or even on essentials, to books of living and earnest religious thought and practice, honestly yielding your heart and life to their lessons. It is in this light that healthy religious Biography is of supreme good, or, indeed, any religious book that carries us with it, as a true utterance of the soul.

Nothing is more needed to keep us clear and firm in our convictions than intelligent views on Christian Doctrine. Not that we can have every detail of spiri-

tual truth reduced to its place in a system, but, still, without clearness on cardinal points, we must have sentiments rather than convictions, and be always exposed to change. Christianity is more than a system of morals; it is a faith in historical facts as well, and their bearing on our salvation. The Life and Death of Christ, and His Resurrection, are no mere accidents of a grand or touching story, from which we have only to learn what we can, as from that of any one else. Our relations to them, and theirs to us, involve our whole future. To read their meaning aright, and to accept it, is vital. To know Christ and the power of His Resurrection, and to understand why so much stress is laid on his death, is implied in our being Christians at all, in the New Testament sense. To overlook them is to ignore the point and burden of both Epistles and Gospels. Through the whole of both, morals are introduced only as if incidentally; the great scheme is a Redeemer,—sinless, yet crucified, but now risen, by whom we are saved through faith in His blood. As to morals, they are treated as only this faith in action. The dislike of any approach to systematic theology has led to vague denunciations of doctrine, and no little cant about ethics preceding it. Take up the New Testament, and you will find that to speak so is a double mistake. Before any human systems were framed, it supplied the material which they all claim only to classify, and it lays the foundation of the only morals it owns, in Christian love.

How best to study these supreme questions, then, is beyond all things important. To expect laymen to turn to theological treatises would be foolish. They are often dry enough even to those to whom they are text books, though some have no such defects.* But the New Testament itself has charms for every Christian. Theology, gathered from it, is direct from the spring. It was the only Manual of the first centuries, to which we all look back as the golden age of the Faith. St. Augustine, the father of systematic theology, in the modern sense, was not born till A.D. 354, and what was so long in coming cannot be held indispensable. I do not disparage a well reasoned Scriptural digest of Christian truth. In religion, as in all other studies, method and order are of the greatest importance, and that Faith must be the most comprehensive, and most intelligent, which rests on the soundest reasoning, and on such a wide induction of sacred authority as scientific theology alone can supply. More than this, I believe it is from the deficiency of this philosophical treatment of Christian Doctrine in our pulpits, that much of the religious agitation we see arises. Still, the fact remains, that the first believers had no "Institutes" but the Bible, and had to make their theology from it, in most part, for themselves. Take their example. Make the New Testament your private text book. Ponder it in parts, and as a whole, with the wish and prayer to be taught of God,

* Let me instance—The Increase of Faith. Blackwoods, 1868. An admirable book.

and with the aid of the best helps you can get, and I feel assured of your becoming, not only a moralist, but an intelligent Christian. That you should understand it all is not to be hoped ; for it treats, by necessity, of much that will only be fully known in a higher state. But you will understand the leading truths of your faith. Nor need the presence of mysteries trouble you. Even Uncle Tom had wit enough to say, that, when he sought a religion, he would seek one above, not below him. We cannot expect to trace the sun-beam up to its source : it is enough that it lightens us where we are.

In these days, I must add a word in behalf of the spiritual freedom which rests on our private judgment as the supreme authority in matters of faith. It is the glory of Christianity that it first proclaimed the divine right of man to settle his own creed and opinions. Liberty finds its *Magna Charta* in the New Testament. It demands for every one that to his own Master he standeth or falleth. What neither Greek, nor Roman, nor Jew, had known, is the birthright of Humanity since the advent of Christ. In religion, He abolished for ever the rule of the priest. Henceforth, conscience is responsible only to God. No class of men have any longer a claim to be authoritative interpreters of His will. The race, for the first time, is brought face to face with its Maker.

Unable at once to use so new and grand a conception, even Christianity, after a time, fell back into bondage to the priest. The mind ceased to think,

and kneeled at the feet of the Church. Darkness fell, thick and deadly, over the world. The revolt of the West, which we know as the Reformation, brought back the day. Its fundamental principle was the protesting against interference with the Freedom of Thought and Opinion. Its creed is noble. It sets the Christian minister at your side, as your friend and teacher, not above you, as a ghostly power between you and God. It allows no man more influence with God than another, except that of superior goodness. It raises the Holy of Holies in the breast, not in a Church: it knows no sacrifice but a broken heart, besides that once made on the Cross; no priest, but Him who has passed into the heavens; no priestly robes, but the holiness of our lives. Be true to this magnificent heritage.

To question the liberty of thought is as opposed to reason as it is to instinct. Passive obedience, or self-annihilation, itself, claimed by any authority, must be shown a warrant for the demand, before it submits; and even its blindest slave must have freely thought and decided upon this warrant before he received it. The Church, or any other claimant of spiritual despotism, must point out the proofs that show her right. Nor can it be allowed that any authoritative interpretation be affixed in advance, for the title and power to do either is the very point to be proved, and can be acknowledged at all, only when the true meaning is fixed by individual judgment. Until this is done, she stands at the bar of the private opinion of every

inquirer. We must use our reason to learn that it must not be used !

The word "Authority," in any such application, is, indeed, a mere illusion and mockery. Man has no authority that can bind the thoughts. The bars of a prison do not convince ; the rack or the stake cannot force the humblest to reject what he thinks truth. "You may sew up my mouth," said the philosopher, "imprison me, load me with chains, but my soul is free, and will remain so." There can be no belief without a willing assent. Doubt cannot be commanded away : it yields only when its grounds are removed. If convincing arguments are advanced, they are sufficient, without authority ; if not, the doubt remains, and authority stands baffled by want of adequate proof of its point. God has made us responsible only to Himself. We cannot believe, if we would, what we do not feel to be true. To think at all, is to judge for ourselves ; to cease to think, is to cease to be men.

Have nothing to do with any lord of the conscience but God. All others are mockeries and impostures. It is in the nature of men to be Popes. We find them many times in our lives, elsewhere than on the Tiber. But it is that fell Anachronism who, by himself, and his satellites, in Protestantism or in Popery, is busiest, now, to enthrall the mind. The shadow of intellectual slavery threatens again to eclipse the light. Be a free man. Human authority in matters of religion palsies the soul. It abjures progress, and denounces all

liberty. Its Encyclicals and Allocutions are the manifestoes of chaos and night. Shun licence, but vow yourself to truth, as her faithful knight, to follow her wherever she may lead. The fair daughter of God, where can she lead, but, in the end, to His feet?

READING.

J OHNSON'S answer to the question "Who was the most miserable man?"—that it was "he who could not read on a rainy day"—seems pretty nearly right, if we may judge from the universality and immemorial antiquity of books of some kind. Wherever a spark of civilization has kindled any higher than mere physical wants, they are sure to show themselves in some form. It may be going too far back to admit the literal exactness of an advertisement lately in all our journals, of "Pre-adamite Literature," or to accept Paul Ikster's catalogue of our First Parents' library, or to receive the opinion of some Irish writers, that there were public libraries in their island before the Flood, or of some others, who gave Noah a nautical library in his Ark—but, still, History and Books dawn together. The grey twilight of the world saw the stylus busy in the far East, writing sacred poems, and we know not what else, on thick, fleshy tropical leaves. Egypt lifts the curtain from her earliest days to show us, at Thebes, the Temple of Thoth—"The God of Letters," with the divinity himself sitting throned over the gate, as the guardian genius of the

literary wonders of the "Library" within—and Canaan had its Book City—Kiriath Sepher—and its Gebal, or Byblos, as the Septuagint reads it, that is—"University Town."* As to Assyria, its clay chronicles lie by the ton in the British Museum. Asia Minor had its Pergamos; Greece and Rome need no mention; and Persia had its Medain. Modern books outrun the forests, now, in their leaves, and, but that the laws of mortality include them as well as their readers, would soon leave us no standing room.

There is an endless pleasure in reading. For books, as Milton says, "are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a potency of life in them to be as active as that soul was, whose progeny they are: nay, they do preserve, as in a phial, the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them." They are the true metempsychosis and transmigration of souls, by which the illustrious dead pass up and down among men for ever. As Bacon says—they are like ships that sail through the seas of Time. Indeed, they are all that remains of the past; except what museums have of stray flotsam and jetsam from the great wreck; waifs cast ashore from the abyss in which all else has gone down. And, after all, without books, even they would be Sphinx's riddles. All that men have proposed, discovered, done, felt, or imagined, so far as it still survives, does so in books, as distant horizons are refracted, at times, on the vapours of the air. Kingdoms and empires have shrunk into so many

* Ewald's "Geschichte des Volkes Israël," i. 354.

alphabetic characters ; their kings and mighty men, with all their affairs, wars, triumphs, national calamities ; their cities, and broad territories ; are shrunk into so many printed words, in so far as they still live. Books are the *speculum* in which all the past lives again, as the future fore-enacted itself in that of the astrologer. The dead generations revisit the glimpses of the moon in books, and the story of the world is rehearsed again for whoever learns to read them. They break down the barriers between the past and the present, and make us the heirs of all ages.

Like the minds of which they are the lasting images and outward presentiments, Books are of all tempers and tastes ; grave or gay ; learned or entertaining ; for passing acquaintance or lasting friendship, wise counsellors or light Yoricks ; travellers, poets, philosophers ; lovers of science, gossips and quid-nuncs, in black or in motley, as you may choose. You get into society, in the widest sense, in a great Library, with the huge advantage of needing no introductions, and not dreading repulses. From that great crowd you can choose what companions you please, for in these silent levées of the immortals there is no pride, but the highest is at the service of the lowest, with a grand humility. You may speak freely with any, without a thought of your inferiority ; for books are perfectly well-bred, and hurt no one's feelings by any discriminations. You are free of the noblest of all guilds, if you be a reader ; that mighty brotherhood of the noblest of all generations ; the wisest, tenderest,

bravest, purest, sunniest, divinest, who have turned away from outside glare and bustle, to hold golden discourse with all who seek them, through all ages. In a Library you become a true citizen of the world; time and distance are outside traditions, and you know nothing of death or change. Character must be elevated by intercourse with lofty thinkers, pure moralists, devout worshippers, and penitent seekers after God; the manners must be refined by the perfect training and finished culture, the sweet delicacy and refinement, and the lofty ideals, they offer; and there can be no delight wanting in the quiet dreams and fancies they awaken, for they hold in their enchanted bounds the whole realm of the beautiful in nature and truth. Books are the visible souls of men, and a good book, like a good life, is filled, as a lamp, with light.

But, whatever they be, they are your servants. Kings and princes of intellect, wisdom, and goodness, wait on the humblest guests. There is no mood in which they will not meet you, and Xerxes need not have sighed for a change of pleasure had he betaken himself to their offices.

Books are moralists even as they stand on our shelves, and while still shut. Their humility is a keen satire on our small pride. They never complain. We may neglect them; they say nothing. We sit amongst them and seek their help, and forthwith they give us their wisdom, or old world stories, or bright fancies, or sweet consolations, till we cry enough, and

bid the dear babblers hush. They know no respect of persons, but are royally courteous, with their grand politeness to peasant and peer, alike. We get heated, and troubled, and puffed up: books keep a lofty serenity, befitting immortals. They, for the most part, have no passions; and even where they are affected, they soon die off to a harmless echo, like distant laughter. They make us ashamed of ourselves, in their presence. Our fumes and vapours die away before their calm rebuke. Our troubles lose their name before their majestic repose, which they have reached through perhaps infinitely greater; now—only forgotten bubbles on the clear flow of their Eternity. Their immortal peace silently hushes our fretting. What are our fermentations and whimsies seen from their serene heights! They look down on us from their galleries, and as we catch their eyes we are silent. Our envies, jealousies, mean ambitions, petty rancours, and strifes, and exaggerations, gnaw and consume us, but they know nothing of them all, and stand lovingly side by side, their heats, and heart-burnings, and eruptions, forgotten for ever. The fiercest opponents find an Elis, disturbed by no angry sounds, on their shelves, and let the dust gather on the records of their ancient wars. Amidst books, we sit in the fore-court of Eternity, for these ethereal and impassive essences know no signs of age after decades of centuries.

As all the murmurs of our cares and follies sink into quiet before their tranquillity, so, our fears find a

gentle remonstrance and abatement. What troubles us, and fills with gloomy forebodings, turns out to be only a repetition of what has proved harmless in the past. There is no dread of the swell, rolling towards us in mountains, after having seen just the same pass idly under us, and away, behind, over the great wastes. The new proves to be only the very old, and thought, like the winds, is found to move in circles. "The Church in danger," wakes no alarm, when we know she has many times survived worse crises uninjured; and we learn confidence about the State, when books tell us that what we doubt, and think the Deluge, has, once and again, proved either harmless or beneficial. Our vanity finds its bladder pricked when we find its triumphs only resuscitations of old failures, and that Dædalus, long ago, tried the same wings, with the most humiliating results.

The sublime patience and forbearance of books is like the placidity of the Sphinx; a perpetual sermon without words. We lose our tempers, forget self-respect, get petulant and wanton, and boil over, at dulness, or inattention, or opposition. If every whim-wham we offer be not praised, we think ourselves ill-used. But there is no such pettiness in books: you cannot ruffle their calm dignity by any slight, or stupidity, or contradiction. They shine on us, like the skies, indifferent to our moods; and, let us treat them ever so rudely, look down on us, as if through clear and serene air, as Lord Bacon says, "with pity, and not with swelling or pride."

Books are the great trainers of men, for work of whatever kind. Not that they are the only discipline or education ; every thing has its lesson if we read it aright ; but they are the storehouse from which both Use and Reflection draw their materials. Without them, we start in life with the wilderness to reclaim before we can plough or reap : with them, we have the soil ready to our hand. To clear the trees, drain the swamps, and prepare for seed, take huge labour, and weary years, that are spared where pioneers have preceded. The wastes of ignorance have been reclaimed by past generations, and he who uses their knowledge, begins as with the broad English fields of to-day, instead of with the savage wildness of old, unbroken woods. Instead of Tubalcain, he has Stephenson for his engineering, and for Jubal's Pan pipes he has Haarlem organs. Without books, the advances of all men before us are well-nigh lost, for practice alone, without education, makes little way. We can be, at most, empirics, without reasons for acting other than fancied experience. We have to begin the alphabet of knowledge, when we should have been far on in the details. Books compress into hours or days the thought and invention of ages : they are machines and tools to utilise strength and realise what would be impossible without their help. Nature gives us the capacity only ; the tools with which to work ; books must fit us to use them, and direct us in doing so ; and they often supply the materials needed. They are the brick and stone, the mortar and timber

of whatever building we propose erecting. John Hunter and George Stephenson, illustrious instances of triumph over early disadvantages, lamented to the last that they had lost years, and were crippled for life, by their deficiencies. Books show us what we cannot do, as well as what we can, and the easiest way. Ignorance attempts impossibilities, and loses substance, as well as time and spirits, by the mistake. How many schemes has it supported which natural laws forbade; how many follies, which knowledge would have exploded in advance. Books not only methodize work for us and start us fairly,—they form the mind, and are for our faculties what manual labour is to the mechanical arts. With the mind as with the hand, practice makes skill. They awaken our sleeping powers; excite the fancy; develope reflection; and give us mental bone and muscle. Children and the illiterate can think only in broken flashes; wise reading makes us able to follow the track of a thought, even where faint, with a patient and practised skill. We come, by it, to be able to use our faculties as the trained runner his limbs, reaching on, fresh and vigorous, where others are blown and fall behind. It is an indispensable element of any wide and liberal culture, and, indeed, its basis; for mere practical knowledge of a science, or art, or profession, may leave the mind narrow and hard, familiar only with its own sheep-walk, but knowing little besides. But wide and wise reading gives a breadth and liberality of tone and feeling, by a wide comparison and a just

estimate of relative values. It harnesses us for our work ; guides us to a right course ; leads us to the front, and gives us the vantage in starting ; corrects vanity and over-confidence, and gives a gentle charity and humility as sweet to ourselves as to others.

But it must not be thought that books alone make a man, or that merely to know them is education. The practical is needed to apply and expand the theoretical. The farmer, the gardener, the planter, must perfect by experience what he has acquired the rudiments of by reading. Neither physic nor law are to be practically known from books, and none are more ignorant of the characters of men than those learned pedants, whose lives have been entirely consumed in colleges and among books.* The mere reader may be virtually ignorant, because unable to use what he knows. Mere words and facts, dead and disjointed, leave a man empty and unfurnished as to all true education. Mechanical practice perfects in physical arts : intellectual discipline must be added to mere knowledge, in higher studies. It was a keen hit made at Kennaquhair University, to lift the college Ass through the Dean's class-room window. Knowledge and wisdom are by no means identical ; you find huge pyramids of learning built up, not seldom, with stupidity for mortar. Wisdom may know fewer words and single, disjointed facts, but she has a divine insight that looks through the surface of things to their essence ; that quickens dead facts into life,

* Vivian Grey, 145.

and, without so much book knowledge, knows infinitely more and higher than mere books, read without her aid, could teach. Knowledge accumulates, but, at the best, its brain is only a dusty cobweb full of dead flies. Wisdom thinks, and makes a solar Drummond light of a point of dull lime.* Knowledge is a huge feeder but never fattens. I shall have more to say of what makes true reading : at present, I only warn you that merely to know is not to be educated. The man may be undeveloped, while the mechanical faculties of the brain are vigorous. What is education is, indeed, a hard question, in these days of universal diffusion of printing. With the greatest of all books, which has moulded the higher thoughts of these last ages, since Ezra gathered it into a Canon, and Apostles completed it, in the poorest houses, and cheap Shakspeares, and Poets, and what not, it is hard to say that any man who can read is uneducated. There are no scales in which to weigh culture, but surely he is a poor goose-cap and feather-brain who sits down to discuss whether Burns or Shakspeare were illiterate, or to what length scholarly. Child ! they knew what you can never know ; they read Man, and knew much of us all, for evermore ; they were high priests of Nature, and, like him of old, were let pass inside the Holy of Holies, and see mysteries hidden from all common

* The Drummond or Lime Light, is an intensely bright light caused by a jet of oxygen and hydrogen, mixed in the proportions in which they make water, both being turned on a cylinder of lime.

eyes. The greatest men have rarely been great scholars. Knowledge is only Adam before the living breath made him more than the clay model of a man. The highest intellect cannot keep to the earth long enough to master vocables and dictionaries as patient dulness can ; it rises ever and anon towards the sun, to sail on the bosom of the upper light.

Still, withal, books are the great magicians who work any miracles at our bidding. They make the dead, long silent, ages, stir, and speak, and play their whole fitful drama again for our pleasure and instruction. What pageants they evoke ! Look through the chink they open into the long past centuries—the arrow slits in the dark walls that gird us round—what glimpses of brightness and moving life ! Mardonius and Xerxes, Miltiades and Themistocles, Marathon and Salamis—the whole story of the agony that saved Western civilisation in its first great peril, is before us. Alexander at the Granicus, at Issus, and Arbela rolls back the many-tongued hosts of the great king. Greek and Barbarian, they have long ago met in peace in the pale kingdoms, but in books they come back again, and pass before us. Greece with its Pericles, its Phidias, its Socrates, and Plato ; Rome with its kings, consuls, tribunes, and emperors, are all astir again. The trumpet wakes from their long sleep the bronze-clad hosts of Cannæ, and Thrasymene, Pharsalia and Actium. The remorseless, enigmatical Sylla, the coarse Marius, the mighty Cæsar, and the weak Pompey, live once more. The cold, bloodless, crafty

Octavian, the wise Trajan, the restless Hadrian, the wonderful Antonines, and that long summer of the world—the happiest age of all history—when the earth rejoiced and was at rest—that closed with Marcus Aurelius—rise at our call. But why unroll the vast canvas; the whole past lives still in books. Then, how they carry us to all the enchanted realms of thought. Poetry reproduces Nature round and within us; the outer visible glory, and the inner life. We cannot all buy pictures, or even see the fields, or woods, or clouds; nor can we all put our thoughts in such words as we should like, or give right names to things, or see hidden relations and harmonies—but the poets do it for us, and create an airy Universe, peopled with visible thoughts and fancies, and bring the beautiful into a printed line, and speak our thoughts for us, and the thoughts of men around, and bring out the unnoticed unities and contrasts that make all things one. Poetry is Nature's Æolian harp, which speaks its lightest Ariel singings or saddest sighs; its mirror, in which the sun and the storm-cloud have each their turn; and books are its voice. Intellect, in all its triumphs, embodies itself in books, and speaks through them to the world. I don't know whether it be a saying of others or my own, but they have the eyes of Argus, the swift feet of Mercury, and the gravity and wisdom of Pallas. No wonder they grow to be a passion. They are the delight of childhood, the strength and incitement of youth; the relaxation of toil; the companions of solitude; the consolations of

trouble ; the wisdom of all who use them aright ; the rejuvenation and anodyne of age. No wonder Cicero says that he would part with all he was worth, so he might but live and die among his books. No wonder Heinsius wrote—"In the lap of Eternity, among so many divine souls, I take my seat with so lofty a spirit and such sweet content, that I pity all the great ones and rich men, that have not this happiness." No wonder Petrarch was among them to the last, and was found dead in their company. It seems natural that Bede should have died dictating, and that Leibnitz should have died with a book in his hand, and Lord Clarendon at his desk. Buckle's last words—"My poor book"—tell a passion that forgot death, and it seemed only a fitting farewell, when the tear stole down the manly cheeks of Scott, as they wheeled him into his Library, when he had come back to Abbotsford to die. Southey, white-haired, a living shadow, sitting stroking and kissing the books he could no longer open or read, is altogether pathetic.

What to read, and how, are the great questions.

1. Make distinctions. Indiscriminate and depraved appetite in reading is as fatal as it is degrading. Unfortunately, it is not the negroes only who are dirt eaters. We need to be as careful of our printed as of our living companions, and of our mental as of our bodily food.

Immoral books are of course to be avoided, whether gross and sensual, or unprincipled. Character is as much needed in books as in men. Insincere books,

written for a purpose, and partizan books, blind to anything calm and impartial, are pestilent ; often misleading, and, if not, at least confusing and blunting the moral sense. I take Warburton's "Divine Legation," justly or unjustly, as a type of books in which the pretended aim is not at all the real one ; display of learning, brilliancy and power of sustaining paradox, appearing much more the impulse, than belief in any views, or modest earnestness to advance them. Your Free-lances in literature, ready to fight under any leader, with opinions and zeal mercenary as a lawyer's—their only thought victory and pay, not the right or the wrong of a thing—who let their conscience on hire, are happily rare now-a-days ; but, where they show themselves, are to be shunned. Cobbett's "History of the Reformation" is perhaps as good an example of such books as modern days have seen ; a book utterly unprincipled and untruthful. One-sided biography ; books whose authors take pains not to hear both sides ; books manufactured ; not conscientiously true and honest—avoid.

Don Juan literature, of all ages, is pestiferous as an open ditch in hot weather. No genius, or wit, or humour, can excuse or neutralise its wantonness. Unfortunately, there is always a supply of it, not seldom from the highest, or most pleasing, intellects. In our day, public opinion forbids licence, but, with all its outward decorum, corrupting sensational novels, spiced with inuendoes, and framing their plots with divorces, seductions, and the like, are immensely

popular, while we have at least one new poet of the Stews. The worst is, bad books, too often, live longer than good ones. Bulwer's early novels will always be read more than his later, to the infinite injury of many. Rabelais, that gross satyr and beast-man, has been reprinted in these last years, and so has Boccaccio's Decameron, and so have the Dramatists of the Restoration, though the sale of such books surely cannot be large. Lewdness has it all its own in them. Their wit or beauty are seldom the uppermost thought; if one turn to them often, they taint the mind. Last century, and the close of the one before it, have left an obscene ooze of immorality and grossness behind them, in nearly all the books they produced. Dryden's translations, Swift's poems, and the Belles Lettres of the whole period, down to Johnson, except the Essayists and their like, are foul as the Serbonian bog. Unreflecting praise of impure books by men themselves past youth is a great calamity. Charles Lamb's laudation of "Tom Jones," for instance, is right enough, if only the genius of Fielding be in mind; but what good can the knowledge of human nature, the wise philosophy, or the good design, do in the face of the loose example of the hero, and the libertinism in both sexes that obtrudes itself in every chapter. To lead any one through such dirty lanes, even to final reformation, fouls whoever may follow the story. As to "Roderick Random," and the merely amusing novels of last century, young men must be far gone before they get a

liking to hunt such sewers for chance spoons or shillings. Charlotte Brontë was right in chiding her hero, Thackeray, for lauding Fielding as he did, and in reminding him how much harm indiscriminate praise of such books as his does to young men such as her poor brother. It may be, that with a few men, literary taste, or purposes of study, or strength of principle, or temperament, may make any reading harmless, as Etty was one of the purest of men, though spending his life in painting naked goddesses ; but it can never be trusted to as the rule. Coarse feeding makes coarse flesh. Filthiness, like toadstools, springs rank, from invisible seeds, and the whole race of unclean books are no better than smuts, and moulds, and mildews. Never be ashamed to have your mind as pure as you would have men believe it. Better let the mud lie unstirred in our nature : there is enough of it to make us thankful when it has settled, and lets the water run clear over it.

It is not always possible, however, to have exactly what you want in books. Unfortunately, our finest literature is too often disfigured by the coarseness of the age in which it was written. It lies here and there even in Shakspeare, like a stain on snow. Some, like Milton and Spenser, from their subjects and their temper of mind, are pure even in the midst of a corrupt taste ; but the majority take their colour from the times, as a stream from its banks. No one fond of reading can keep clear of all that is wrong, for to do so would be to turn the key on literature, at

once. But you don't give up country walks because you have to hurry past some spot in your ramble ; why not hurry past what hurts or offends in a book, as well? Everything turns on the spirit and tone of what we read. With some, passing impurity is an accident ; with others, it is ingrained and essential. To seek grossness for its own sake argues grossness : to avoid a great author because he offends good taste here and there is impossible, if our minds are to grow. It depends on the mood in which we meet indelicacy whether it harm us. Without courting, and while regretting them, it would not do to proscribe everything that has any blemishes. Where there is no sympathy, the passing shadow leaves no mark, and raises aversion rather than pleasure. A healthy mind is the great safeguard. It is predisposition that induces infection : the poison must have something in the blood, of which to lay hold, before it can fever us. It is a libel on any one to say of himself that every spark may catch and inflame him. If you must do it, as a student, or from the unavoidable mixture of the bad with the good—touch impurity as the sea-bird touches the wave, to rise from it with no trace of the contact, or, like the light, pure whatever it shines upon. We cannot always keep under glass, and we meet coarseness elsewhere than in books. The great thing is to have strength to repel it. Still, there is plenty for a young man to read that is pure and good without turning to the filthy, however mixed with the reverse. I would not, for example, advise you to begin *Tristram Shandy*,

though Uncle Toby be in it, and Le Fevre's Story—while you have not read Goldsmith, who is as pure as Tristram is immodest. Many books do no harm after a time, that are not best to begin with. The less you have to do with uncleanness of any kind, the better. They say that serpents cannot let go what they once have begun to swallow; it must go down, and stay there: and so, alas, too often, with evil. To touch it is to have too much of it. Besides, in any case, selection is possible. Some books are so vile that to open them is to look into a steaming crater, with sulphur fumes meeting you at the first glance. There is much even in Shakspeare which would have been better left out. Some of his characters are better unknown, either in imagination or real life. The Comedies are too often unworthy of him, but the Tragedies are magnificent every way. It is, indeed, a wonder that he is so pure as he is; so free from the faults of his age; with so grand a morality; so devout a religiousness; so lofty a discourse on all that most affects us; but, if he were amongst us now, I question if he would not put his pen through a good many expressions, and issue his own "Household Edition." Still, with him, you have, at the worst, only threads, here and there, through pure Parian: earthstains on the diamond, where, in others, the stray pearls lie scattered, rarely, over whole banks of vileness.

Iconoclast Literature, which sets out to sneer at, or contradict, whatever men think most sacred, needs a young man to have thoughtful care of it. If read, both

sides should be so. Nothing is easier than to frame false hypotheses, and as Dr. Cullen said long ago, there are always "false facts" to support them. Scientific men and very broad theologians have started Pilate's question once more, and write away the credit of all the Thirty-nine Articles in hasty Essays. They must needs remodel religion, and are ready, like Mummius with the pictures of Apelles, to furnish other creeds for what they destroy. We are in the cold fit of our religious history at present: the warmth will return with reviving health. Religion courts light, but it asks sunlight. Temperate and reverend criticism can only do good, but light repudiation and jeering is a mistake, often exposed already. False preconceptions, and human mistakes and exaggerations must perish; but the living truth, which has survived so much, will outlive any mere modes and notions. A habit of doubt is fatal to a calm and fair estimate of moral evidence, and is like to end in mere Pyrrhonism, where it does not double back to weak superstition.

The mere leveller is scarce, however, at present. Gibbon's pretence of respect for Christianity, while seeking at every step to discredit it, would meet no favour, I apprehend, now. He would need to be much more manly, and to wear his true colours. The trouble with our day is that the very meaning of religion is changed with too many critics. It has come to be so comprehensive that it embraces contradictories; it is an intellectual state apart from its objects or aims. Christianity keeps its place in the list of faiths, but

only as a system of morals, and finds itself bowed into a levée of all possible creeds as one of the company. Everything is Christianity now-a-days, and Christianity is everything. Doctrines are ruled aside : ethics alone are respected. But mere earnestness is not Christianity. Jonathan Edwards says the most devout man he ever knew was a Jew ; and any one who watches at St. Sophia will soon find that Mahomet has followers as sincere and self-denying as those of Jesus. But, surely, it is wrong to treat all religions alike, because some who belong to them are sincere, or because, in all religions whatever, there must be some good. The very sentiment itself is right, at the starting—to worship : and to a certain length all religions spring from the same impulses, and exhibit similar principles. But, after all, there is a vast difference between Christ and other Masters, else we have a pantheon, not a single Mediator between God and man. Theodore Parker, perhaps, offends most flagrantly, of modern English-speaking writers, against our religious ideas, but he is not so popular as to do much harm. Emerson comes close behind, substituting the Pantheism of the Vedas and Puranas, and of Hegel, for revelation ; making himself and man, in fact, the highest manifestation of God ; His avatar and ever visible presence. How he shocks us by bracketing the most unlikely names with that of Christ, all know who read his books. True, there is much more mud than depth in his utterances, but obscurity passes for profundity with many. I take him for one of the Iconoclasts who would cut down

the groves and burn the altars of the world, and give them only a vague sentiment instead. Some, with the sincerest respect for his character, and with high admiration of him, wrongly include loving-hearted, great-souled, Thomas Carlyle with such company. No living man has done so much to exalt the spiritual; to make life real and earnest; to help men to realise how brief it is, and how stupendously the great future overshadows us. His wonderful industry, conscientious truthfulness, hatred of all hypocrisies; his deep religious feeling, his large sympathies, fine imagination, picturesque vigour of style, and deep insight into the springs and principles of things, make him an honour to his generation, and, even in his life-time, give him an earnest of the fame which he will permanently enjoy. But, with all this, is it deplorable that a young man should yield himself up to his influence without reflection? I think not. That there is so much dispute as to his religious opinions is itself significant: where there is such uncertainty we must think before we follow. Would that, even on a platform of his own, eschewing sects or organizations, this grand man grouped himself with Christians in the ordinary sense. If he felt free to do so, he himself would be the first to acknowledge it. That he is a better man than many who call themselves so, is little, for morality is by no means a monopoly of Christians. But what is his proper place? Is he an English Seneca, or better than that for parallel, an English Jean Paul?—that seems nearest the mark. The same huge, curious learning, the same poet's eye,

the same picturesque individuality of style and treatment, the same worship and noble reverence. Assuredly it would be contrary to the teaching of the "Life of Sterling,"—that truest and most touching of all modern Lives—to rank him in any church in the common use of the word. Nor can the whole cast of his thoughts and language be understood, except when read in the light of a great poet's vision, which makes the vast Universe one indivisible whole, of which the spark from the forge, and the light of life, are one with the stars, revealing the Divine Soul we call God. Young men, for a generation, have been captivated by the moral and intellectual grandeur of the modern prophet, and have striven to think him what his own presbyterian education defines in its Confession, but can he, without violence to his noble honesty, be spoken of thus? Would that he were as clear and full on this point of points as he might be. Others, without his head or heart, are like to become very different from him, by misunderstanding him. Jesus Christ is "our divinest symbol," but is the "Peasant Saint" no more? The Bible is "the most earnest of books"—"the Divine Hebrew Book," but is our highest guidance our own nature, instead, or how far beyond earnestness does the Bible lead us? I write in no narrow spirit of any school, but with a deep sense of the infinite mystery over and around us; of the awful mystery we ourselves are. I ask or expect no sharp pre-raphaelitism in the details of a creed; vague Turner haze, on the distance, and upper perspective, would content me; but to have

all haze, to have not even a clear foreground, leaves too much room for conjecture, and is liker the confusion of a palette than the intelligent unity of a picture. Let us at least have a good study, with some finish in the leading thoughts, if only rough sketching or vagueness round. Granting that the light does hide the stars ; it reveals the sun.

To proscribe Fiction as such, is simply absurd ; as much so as a Maine Law against bottles, not their contents. What matters it what the bottle be if what it holds is right ? The worst drinks might be, and I daresay often are, put in the nicest looking. You can by no means depend on the mere outside shape for the quality within. Some books have a character, and are admitted without remark : history, sermons, poetry, books of life and manners, and yet, beyond doubt, many are very inferior ; some positively hurtful. There are histories seemingly written by the Devil's advocate ; sermons, very poor, or thin, or flat and worthless—plenty of them ; poets with a Bona Roba for goddess, or with no inspiration at all, and books of life and manners fitted to ruin both ; and there are Fictions with all the qualities which graver forms of literature want. Why, Fiction includes everything, from a parable to Reynolds' novels ; from Pilgrim's Progress to the Mysteries of Paris. It is only the bottle in which an author puts whatever he has to offer—history, poetry, the passions, travel, description, politics, religion, pictures of life, outer and inner, with every idiosyncrasy besides, that seeks publicity, and

chooses the most popular medium for diffusion. Nothing ever was or can be so universally acceptable as tales and sketches. Human life and passion must ever be the most human of all things, and hence the most engrossing. There is a novel in the British Museum written for an Egyptian prince royal when Moses was in his bulrush ark; and our great-great-grandmothers used to hang over Madame Scuderi's "Clelia" and the "Grand Cyrus," in ten volumes a piece, as much as library catalogues of to-day show all the world does at this moment. You may string what beads you choose on the thread of Fiction; diamond necklaces or paste; amber or worthless glass; or if, in savage fashion, you like them better, you may substitute apes' teeth. The same dress may be chosen by very different wearers: to condemn all, or any, for wearing an innocent pattern is preposterous enough. If all the imaginative literature in the world were burned up to-day it would begin again to-morrow, to the infinite advantage of authors and book manufacturers generally. To say that fiction cannot be truth is an error; it is the strictest truth to some copy, if it be of the highest class, for it takes rank only as it holds the mirror to Nature. Exaggeration or caricature has no vitality: only severe truth has any lasting popularity. Mere didactic novels are only essays in a catching form, and never keep their place long. How many read "Coningsby," now, or "Sybil"? No one cares to have political theories and party merits sandwiched with love affairs, and passed off under the name of a novel. The "Caxtons"

and "My Novel" have a circle who read them for their criticism and reflections on men and things: Scott's novels will always keep a large popularity by their powers of description and dramatic force, their historical colouring, and wonderful truthful creative power. Thackeray's amazing reproductions of *Life*, true to Nature as a Flemish painting; crystal dials, beneath which the wheels and works show themselves in their finest movements—pure as true, and lofty as pure; Jane Eyre's, with their mysterious insight into the inmost thoughts, and power of putting these thoughts in words; miracles of moral anatomy and studies of style:—these and many more—those of Dickens, pre-eminently, will live with a more or less undying vitality. If they were not true in the highest sense, they would perish like the ephemera of the literary season; windfalls to printers and trunk-makers.

Not to read Fiction now-a-days would be to make a vow of ignorance, and count reading heretical. Imaginative literature never had so wide or so beneficent a reign. It is multiplying readers immensely, and supplying them with an infinite variety of healthful food. The greatest trouble is, lest the appetite should grow tyrannical, and refuse anything in other forms. Novels have their true place, after all, only as a relaxation. To make them a habitual indulgence, to the exclusion of weighty and systematic reading, is a great mistake. It is unhealthy to give oneself too much even to the best fiction: it cannot supply all

we need, and indisposes us for the application which is the condition of solid attainments. At the best it is a relish ; not daily bread : it may refine, amuse, indoc-trinate in a light superficial way ; give us wise thoughts and keen observation, but it cannot supplant serious and unattractive study, or give comprehensive know-ledge. It teaches only in weak dilution. It is snow-shoe literature, with a large surface in proportion to the weight to be carried : better than nothing for progress, but far below the plain road and fair walking. Much of it is suited for mental invalids and persons of weak digestion ; but a healthy stomach wants no such infusions and weak spoon meat. To affect to get history from Fiction is to seek grain in the unwinn-owed chaff-heap, when you might have it clean to your hand. Mere foolish readers, who fly from novel to novel, good, bad, or indifferent ; whose only thought is amusement, forget what is due to themselves, and dissipate what powers they have. Coleridge was right in saying that this unsettledness and dislike of real mental work was one of the greatest evils of excessive liking for light reading. Make the Novel an indulgence ; not a pursuit : turn to it as a rest after work, not in place of conscientious industry, and read only the best.

Light reading of any kind comes under the same restrictions as Novels. Magazine and Review readers are a countless army. They spend years in detached and fragmentary reading that, after, all does not make even an intelligible mosaic, and remain ignorant of

more than separate facts and partial glimpses to the end. There can be very little to learn when a few pages can teach it. They carry about a brick as a model of the temple of Knowledge. Not that current literature is to be overlooked : due attention to it is most necessary, that we may advance with our age. Criticism, Monographs, discussions of questions in any department of thought or inquiry, stimulate, and keep us from losing practical interest in men and things. With solid and able essays, wherever found, I have no fault. But mere confections are cared little for by healthy appetites. Dissipation is a bad sign for either mind or body, and so are the foolish likings of childhood for mere sweets. Your trifling readers fill their minds as children fill their pockets : they have the intellectual counterparts of the cherry-stones, the broken knife, the bits of glass, the top and string, the old pipe, and the piece of slate-pencil. They are never men of any weight, but rather talkers, who read to-day for talk to-morrow : superficial pretenders to knowledge, who only show by their fragmentary acquirements their real ignorance. They shine with a phosphorescent, fish-skin light where it is dark enough : in the day-time they are invisible. What wretchedness they must at times suffer is hard to realise. One question more, and they are gone, or must speak, at best, at a venture. They have to take Laurie Todd's plan, and, for want of stock, tie their gimlets or corkscrews on brickbat packages, to look like honest bundles and fill their shelves. They are like stair mirrors that

invite you to go this way and that, only to stop you at the next step. Able writing of any kind has its value: the trouble is when lazy or superficial readers limit themselves to an essay, and assume airs on the strength of it. Beware of royal roads to anything worth while. By-path meadow was longer than the straight highway.

The great secret of right reading, as of all other right work, is that it be conscientious and thorough: that of one who does not forget that life is brief and work sacred. An earnest man may be left in the company of any books. There was a world of significance in Johnson's putting the motto on his watch—*Ἐρχεται νύξ*—"the Night cometh." This little islet of our life—with deep calling to deep round it, for ever, and the tide covering it, moment by moment—is too small for any neglect. Eternity comes up like the night, hiding all things, and blotting out the sun. There is no time for trifling. The true Pactolus, with every sand golden, is life.

Shall we read old Books or new? Read both. You must know the present to be of use to it, and can know it best and fully only by knowing the past as well. Some men have a passion for antiquity that gives it a monopoly of virtues and good qualities, and, like Charles Lamb, like nothing that is not in folio: others, foolishly affect to condemn whatever is old, with a few exceptions, for their own credit. To be a mere virtuoso and literary antiquary is a very mechanical taste, and has more to do with type, and printer,

and binding, than contents. It is mere affectation to think nothing good in reading till it hangs long enough to have a flavour. Coleridge used to say that a dead dog at a distance smells like musk, and he might have added the same of a good many dead books. A thing is not necessarily better for age, though, as a rule, it must have had extra life in it to keep so long above ground. Oblivion is covered with the daily drift of drowning books, and it takes a strong swimmer to keep afloat where so many are going down around. I confess to a profound respect for these survivors of long dead and forgotten generations: they are the old Parrs of the literary world: the Shem, Ham, and Japhets of the other side of the Flood. An oak that has kept death at bay for centuries claims that you uncover to it, though it be hollow in part, and gnarled and doddered with moss and ivy. The abuse of antiquity; the making a whim, and fancy, and beguilement, of it, are the evil.

All the present has its roots in the past, and though our own times be the true antiquity of the world, yet the youth has affected the age. To stir and turn over the soil is as needful for wise gardening as to look at the growing stem or the leaves. But to waste time on the mere rubbish of the past—the books that are no books, as Charles Lamb calls them; “Almanacs, Court Calendars, Directories, Pocket Books, Draught-boards, bound and lettered on the back,” and the like, is a foolish prodigality. How much that was of no value must Sir Walter Scott, or Southey, or even Charles

Lamb have read? If a thing were old it was enough for them. But to underrate the past is equally unwise. To read only new books may give surface, but can never give depth. The great books of the world, like the stars, shine only here and there, but the zenith has them as well as the nadir. We walk in the light of past intellect for most part; the present, as a rule, is only the moon to it. We exaggerate what is close to us and depreciate the past, or the reverse, as our humour leads, but both are foolish. The great names of all ages are the mountain chains of Humanity, from which descend the treasures of the upper heavens to water the lower levels.

There are some old books about which all are agreed—Homer, Shakspeare, Milton, and the mighty spirits whom the world acknowledge. But the lesser names are more questioned. No one could choose for another in such a matter. Taste and opportunity must decide. Young men will, however, of course, begin with the modern and work back, so that they will themselves find what most pleases them. The poets, the great prose writers, the dramatists, and the few great books of foreign birth—Dante, Cervantes, Goethe—wait for you, and will enrich you in proportion as you pay them reverence. You cannot be familiar with many, but, travelling among them, you can choose your friendship, and freely settle where to dwell. There is no gift they have not in their store—imagination; learning; genius; wealth of words; thoughtful philosophy; divine insight; delicate sym-

pathies ; lofty principle ; wit, humour ; every tree and flower that God lets grow in the glorious paradise of the soul's creations. 'These reverend ancients touch the eyes, blind before, and nature, within and around, stands revealed. Their very names are delights. Shakspeare and Milton, and Jeremy Taylor, and Fuller, and Sir Thomas Browne, and Bacon, and the last century Essayists, and Goldsmith, with his exquisitely natural simplicity and ease,—and a shining train besides ! Thank God for the great books of the world ! One age can do little ; each generation has its own miracles. The tree of knowledge grows by slow rings, and owes its height and grandeur to all the past, since Eden.

To read every book that comes across one, even of our own particular kind, as an ostrich eats whatever comes in its way, is to invite mental and moral dyspepsia and disease to any stomach less than miraculous. Negro dirt-eaters swell out with their vile load, and yet grow leaner each day. Our time is too short to let us be indiscriminate, and the world of books too vast for our subduing more than a very corner of it. Five hundred thousand in the British Museum, more or less, are equal, at one a week, large and small, to somewhere about eight hundred years' work, not to speak of the yearly increase, spreading out like the breadth of a river, through these centuries, as education and population extend. Take the authorities quoted in any great book, or where the subject is new to you, and an infinite sea of names, in multitudinous

confusion, stretches round you forthwith. Look into Bayle's Dictionary, or the notes and references in Gibbon, or look at poor Buckle's unfinished books, or at D'Israeli the elder's compilations, and you will be disposed to repeat Newton's humility about picking up pebbles at the edge of the great sea. Be sure that you need not attempt to know everything. The only thing possible is to choose some path, and master as much on each side of it as you can.

Make a conscience of reading nothing inferior. Stupidity or commonplace is tolerable only when no better can be had; like bread of moss or sawdust, that needs a famine to get it down, except with simpletons, who will eat anything. Men gave up acorns when they grew wheat; and black bread has no chance against white, where there is either taste or sense.

Have a careful eye on "denominational literature," or class reputations. Even brown paper will rise to the chimney-pots for a time, if kindly winds lend their mouths to puff it. Young men, especially, are spell-bound in their respective circles; fascinated, like cocks by a chalk mark, unable to get beyond it or rise from it. Men are accepted as oracles of schools and sects by the accident of their position, apart from merit. Your popular preachers, able professors, drawing-room poets, and the like, are too often only plaster gods. The libraries of young men are largely filled with books which they will be ashamed of after a few years. Let the world, not a clique, be your assayers, and take nothing without its mint-mark. Some books,

like Charles Lamb's "Essays," or Wordsworth, never get widely popular, from their very merits; others strike the public taste, with far less claim to do so, and are on every table. Mr. Tupper, in his two hundredth edition, and Thackeray, read only here and there, tell a lesson of the value of some popular estimates, at any rate. Many books live only while their authors are alive, and go down with them, like the weapons and gala dress of an Indian chief, to the grave. An elderly man's library is pretty sure to show lines of back titles no better than tombstones, on what, when bought, were fashionable and popular treatises. Elia was very far from alone, in his indignation at the "things in books' clothing, perched upon shelves, like false saints, usurpers of true shrines, intruders into the sanctuary, thrusting out the legitimate occupants."* Be chary of giving a book the honour of reading it; and as to a place in your library, let it be hard to gain as the inner mysteries. Respect yourself too much to take up with indifferent company, either in print or in broad-cloth.

Choose only the best books, and read them well. An acre thoroughly worked is better than a farm of weeds. It is not how much you read, but how much you make of it that tells. Coke's maxim, "*non multa sed multum*"—not many things but much—was Eldon's motto, and has been the rule with every one, more or less, who has done much to any purpose; for the advice is really as old as Pliny and Seneca.

* Elia, 212.

Clarendon made favourites of Livy and Tacitus, that he might catch the characteristics of both for his History; Rousseau fixed on Plutarch, Montaigne, and Locke, as his closest book friends; and Sir William Jones used to say he read Cicero through every year. Lord Brougham was a striking example of weakening one's self by trying too much. The saying was rightly applied to him, that "his forte was Science, his foible Omniscience," for none of his books, except perhaps his "Sketches of Statesmen," seem at all likely to survive him. The old Latin proverb bids us beware of the man of one book.*

Many men spend more time on beginnings than would make them know much, if less unsettled, and end without finishing anything, or knowing anything well. Desultory reading, like all desultory work, undoes to-day the progress of yesterday, and leaves only so many failures. Butterfly readers, passing from book to book and resting on none, can get little good. Nor does it do to jumble books without plan in your head. Determine on a course, and keep in it till you have mastered it. If History, let one book follow and corroborate, expand, or continue the other; only, master your books as you read. Make your road firm as you go, and keep to a definite aim. Philosophy, morals, literature, or science, require system and sequence. Each step, wisely taken, throws light on the next. The opinions of one thinker open the way to those of his successor, or are disproved by him. The books

* *Cave ab homine unius libri.*

and acts of one generation are the earing and harvest of those of an earlier. Thought, like the tides, swings within fixed limits, with ages for systole and diastole, ebb and full, and to know to-day you must be a student of all the past. In the story of men and nations the roots of the present spread, unseen, through the soil of antiquity, and need tracing. History, and all past knowledge, is one, as a river is one from the hills to the sea, or as the day is one from the dawn to sunset. A period, or school, or science, even in any of its subordinate aspects, opens insensibly many inquiries, branching everywhere. Any study whatever, like the Roman Forum, finds all roads lead to it and from it.

How to read is a great matter. Some books, says Bacon, are only to be tasted ; others swallowed ; some few are to be chewed and digested :—that is, some books are to be read only in part ; others, to be read, but not curiously ; and some few to be read wholly, with diligence and attention. It would, indeed, be impossible to do more ; for if such advice were needed in Bacon's day, what would he give in ours ? Even single books are often more than can well be mastered, especially the folios that delighted our forefathers. As Erasmus said, one could not carry Aquinas on his back, far less in his head. Prynne, without his ears, poor fellow, had a scribbling demon that drove his pen over the manuscript and supervision for the press of nearly two hundred books—all rind, no fruit, as his contemporaries used to say—and what clerk

would now copy what some authors of his generation published! Many books, indeed, may be worthy of much more honour than we can give them; but what can one do. It sometimes seems as if Gibbon were right, that the Latins and Caliph Omar did more good than harm, by destroying so much of the literature of antiquity. It is bad enough as it is, with some hundreds of volumes surviving, but what would it have been, if, for example, the five thousand books written by Didymus, the grammarian, had clamoured for notice? English Literature of any one age would be enough to take up our life, were it wise to turn slaves to any one hobby. But no one should think of burrowing in any one literary warren all his days. We need varied knowledge, and except where special study is needed for a definite end, sufficient thoroughness is gained by judiciously planned reading, without demanding lengthened attention to single points. Some books neither require nor suggest much thought; others are made for it. Not a few readers, however, use books to keep them from thinking; as others roll their eyes to secure vacancy, and bring sleep; which may be well enough when we need rest after honest work, but if instead of it, writes its own condemnation. To think is to live: Descartes was right in his aphorism—"I think, therefore I am."* Education is the growth of the mental and spiritual man, not of the merely mechanical and mimetic. Stick whittling is not wood carving, nor could the greatest dexterity in it make a Grinling

* Cogito, ergo sum.

Gibbons. Mere reading may employ only the eye and the mere outside faculties, while the higher sit within, unemployed and wasting. To think intelligently and judge soundly; weighing, balancing, generalizing; to be able to reason as you read, and dispute with your author till convinced, is the indispensable condition of a healthy intellect, well grown and proportioned. The faculties get hopelessly incapable of severe attention, if not trained to it; the whole mind is debilitated; it loses all appetite for healthy food, or power to digest it. Desultory reading becomes incorrigible, and thinking grows an intolerable aversion. The rambling knowledge gained by such a reader is a worthless conglomerate of fragments; a confused, crude farrago; a pudding-stone olio. The mind uneducated in its manlier faculties is weak as a child's. A shrewd question throws it aback, and it can no more argue from step to step towards a conclusion than if it knew nothing. One wing clipped, it can fly up only to come round, in a circle, to the ground again, presently.

Quick readers can carry little; they could not run so if weighted. Coleridge's classification of the varieties of book users is admirable; the HOUR-GLASS readers, whose reading, like the sand, runs in, and then out, leaving nothing behind; the SPONGE readers, who imbibe every thing, only to return it as they got it, or dirtier; the JELLY-BAG readers, who let the pure pass and keep only the dregs and refuse; and the fourth—who, like the slaves in Golconda mines, cast aside all that is worthless, and keep only the diamonds and

gems. Let your mind, like an alembic, distil the essence from all your studies. Think less of style than matter: the leaden casket had Portia's treasure. Each age has its fashion in writing, as in all things, though it seems, at last, that simplicity and ease had finally won the day. Make a good book your reverend teacher, with whom discourse, asking and hearing by turns. To be disputatious is hurtful every way, but to be passive is equally so. A manly independence, thoughtful and modest, is the happy mean. In all your reading aim to be able to think, for he is never a man who has to take all his thoughts second-hand. A good reader reads slowly; makes sure of his meaning; often stops to see that he understands, or to reflect and judge; and turns back in his mind to retrace the way he has come. He must needs pay close attention to all that makes up the sense: that is, to the separate words; for to know an author's meaning is, of course, possible only when all his words are understood. How much lies in this, you may see in one of John Ruskin's books, in which he analyses a passage of Milton, as an illustration of the necessity of such minute knowledge of words, or in any good criticism of any author. Richter used to make lists of all the new words he met in his reading; and so, no doubt, have all whose vocabularies have been copious, except perhaps Shakspeare, who seems to have needed no such helps of any kind as the rest of men. Try to realise the first fresh meaning of any word; that common when it was new and living; to find out

allusions ; shades of force ; the metaphor that lies behind most of our commonest ideas, but has been forgotten by familiarity. Some words of great reputation would turn out, like Scriblerus' shield, only old kettle lids ; others, with no pretensions, would be found gold. It is quite amazing how few words most people really understand. They think they know them, and read confidently on ; but they might as well have a good many missed out, so far as the sense is concerned. How much etymology may teach is seen in that very word "desultory," used so often of reading, and meaning, to pass from book to book, as "a desultor," or vaulter, used to leap from horse to horse—the very type of everything broken, fitful, inconstant, spasmodic, and rambling.

A thoughtful reader, then, makes much of little, and cultivates reflection and reasoning that train him for every mental process. "We learn how to use our studies," says Bacon, "by observation." To think, deduce, and contrast, makes each page fruitful, but to follow any one implicitly makes us mere echoes and shadows ; Pepper's Ghosts, intellectually. Tree-Frog minds, that take the colour of the leaf on which they light for the time, are numerous. Newspapers have any number of them in their constituencies, who let the contributor do all the thinking for them ; and there are long rows in the pews each Sunday. Multitudes make a bell-wether of whatever book they last read, and follow its tinkle with woolly-headed docility. A few books well used are worth the whole British

Museum Library with only the eyes awake. Bunyan had little more than his Bible, and we know what he did : others, with libraries, have died without leaving a sign of their mental being. Mere mechanical reading is only a useless fish-like opening and shutting the mouth on nothing, or makes us disagreeable pedants, or childish Dominie Sampsons.

But reading books is not all. We may read other things, while apparently idle. Men might think Genius wasting its time, when it is most improving it. Bernard used to say that his books were the woods and the fields, and his best teachers the beeches and the oaks. Books are only human : Nature is the mirror of God. Socrates, intense Athenian cockney as he was, and Johnson, who was a London one, thought little of Nature, but much of the study of Men. Crabbe found a world in the humble circle of the poor of a country parish ; and White an illimitable range for his fine observation in a Hampshire rectory. Genius fringes the commonest leaf or spray with prismatic colours, and looks at everything through polarized light. It can find wise and worthy study for a lifetime in following up hints, or in the least angle of the great field of knowledge. Science opens the secrets of the unknown almost as slowly as the soft winds, or the beating rain-drops, or the sunbeams, wear into the everlasting hills ; grain by grain, flake by flake, a loosened stone to-day, a landslip to-morrow,—but how little, after ages ! The favourite of Nature wins her smile by knightly devotion, and, for

his reward, she shows herself to him with a thinner veil than to others, but still hidden. At times, it may be, she even vouchsafes a distant momentary glimpse of her features, as if through the green light of leafy shades ; but advance brings retreat. No Actæon ever surprises this Diana in the pool. We go out, like children, for a summer day's ramble, and, in life, bring home only a few wild-flowers, gathered as we wandered by the edge of a summer brook. We know just nothing : happiest then when we feel this. What we do know, we learn best by thoughtful brooding over read or noticed facts. Men sometimes seem idle when they are least so. The wheel looks at rest when at the fastest : the top stands still only when at its highest. From the commonest occasions the apparently vacant mind may be gathering the grandest results. The swinging of a lustre in the Cathedral at Pisa suggested the pendulum to Galileo. The lifting of a kettle lid by the steam led the Marquis of Worcester, in the Tower, to the first steam-engine. Davy discovered iodine in the residuum of soap-ley, from noticing that the Alpine peasants cured their goitres by the ashes of burned sponge, a marine production, like the kelp then used in the manufacture. Oersted, seeing the needle tremble by electricity, thought his way to the whole theory of the Telegraph. John Hunter came to tie up aneurisms, from the phenomena of the shedding of the horns of deer. Thinking quickens dead facts into life : it turns poor brain-seeds into silver paradise bowers, and changes darkness to

day. Reading should be a Columbus voyage, in which nothing passes without note and speculation : the Sargasso Sea, mistaken for the New Indies ; the branch with the fresh berries ; the carved pole ; the currents ; the colour of the water ; the birds ; the odour of the land ; the butterflies ; the moving light on the shore. Let Bacon speak again :—" Read not to believe, and take for granted, not to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider." Remember—little may hint at much ; the illustration of a law that binds the Universe may show itself in a falling stone ; and a thread may lead into an unimagined Rosamond's bower.

Some men read too much and think too little : that is, they read too much for their thinking. By rail, you can remember no details of a journey : the speed confuses recollections and leaves only general impressions. To gallop through book after book, is to turn intellectual Gilpins. You might as well be carried blindfold, from one point to another, you would know as much of the road you came. Let the whole bench of your faculties sit in full court on whatever you read, and rather read five good books well than a hundred with light inattention. Your learned men are often mere prating coxcombs, and empty goosecaps. Scott's Dr. Dryasdust has many successors, with endless facts, scientific, theological, or other, but their learning makes them only the greater bores.

Never, however, think you have read enough to let you forswear books altogether. St. Anthony used to have it said of him how wonderful it was that he, an

uneducated man, without books, should know so much ; but what would he have known with them to suggest, and help ? Even the eagle can hardly mount off level ground ; but, from a height, he leans on the air, and rises, at once, on strongest flights. If reading be not a delight it can never yield much. Your idle, unwilling apprentice makes a poor end of books, as of any other work. Patience and noble thrift of opportunity are needed to do much in a field so vast as knowledge. No day must want its line. John Hunter's mind used to be compared to a beehive, with every faculty collecting, arranging, and storing the fruits of a marvellous industry. Even genius cannot afford to be idle. How must Michael Angelo have studied and toiled to be the painter, architect, and sculptor he was. How much learning is there in "Paradise Lost." What a worker Scott was. There is a striking story of him in Lockhart's Life. A knot of young men had met in a friend's house, close to Sir Walter's, but at an angle with it, so that the back window looked towards his study. The host's son seemed to grow unwell as the night went on, and Lockhart rose to offer him what help he could. "I shall be well enough presently," said he, "if you will only let me sit where you are and take my chair ; for there is a confounded hand in sight of me here, which has often bothered me before, and now it won't let me fill my glass with a good will !" They exchanged places, and he went on :—"Since we sat down," said he, "I have been watching it—it fascinates my eye—

it never stops—page after page is finished and thrown on that heap of MS., and still it goes on unwearied,—and so it will be till candles are brought in, and God knows how long after that. It is the same every night—I can't stand a sight of it when I am not at my books." It was Sir Walter Scott—busy with the two last volumes of "*Waverley*."* Carlyle is half right in calling genius only the capacity of infinite labour : half right—not more, for labour alone would be a poor exchange for it. The Temple may rise like the palm, silent as graceful, but the forests and hill-depths have sounded for long with the weary preparations. Unopened doors rust past opening, and if too much light blinds, so does too little.

Humility and modesty are indispensable to true progress. Self-sufficiency is a full cup which lets additions run over. To learn our mistakes, and undo our prejudices and preconceptions, is a great end in reading. Wise books help by pruning our overgrowth as much as by anything they teach. Our vanity exaggerates our powers and attainments so as to hinder our learning as we might. A young man needs docility above all things : he has to undo most of his previous thinking and conclusions. Like the wilderness, there is work enough, to clear, before you can sow. What is the widest knowledge of any of us all—far less of a life at its opening? Look into that little pond in the field : its circle, small though it be, teems with mysteries of which we know nothing. As Gibbon

* Lockhart's Scott, 257.

says, well, the burnished fly on the proud dome of St. Sophia was a greater wonder than that glory of Justinian's reign. Humphry Davy's figure—the larger the circle of light, the larger the circle of darkness surrounding it, is and will be the grand truth of the known and unknown for ever, for there never will come a day, in unending eternity, when even an archangel shall have explored the Universe, and must weep that there are no more worlds to conquer. Michael Angelo spoke for all true students, when, in his last days, in a patriarchal age, he drew himself as an old man in a go-cart, with the motto—"ancora imparo"—still learning.

"Marshal thy notions into a handsome method," says old Thomas Fuller: "one will carry twice more weight trussed and packed, than when it lies untoward, flapping and hanging about his shoulders." Order in the thoughts is a great economy of labour, and help to memory. De Quincey's plan as to dates was a good one: Pisistratus, B.C. 555; Herodotus, B.C. 444; Alexander, B.C. 333; the culmination of the Dark Ages, A.D. 999; and so on. As to commonplace books, practice and counsel vary. George Borrow says it has been always a trouble with him that he could never forget anything. Scott's memory was "a prodigious machine," as Lockhart says: and Macaulay apparently never forgot even chance verses. Sir James Mackintosh had such another wonderful mental tenacity. But all are not so. Turner's notebooks show constant diagrams or skies, with the

names of the colours written at each part. Scott tells how he walked all over Rokeby, noting the flowers, and how people praised his invention and truth to nature, when they should have commended his pocket-book. Sir Thomas Bodleigh wrote to Bacon to "treasure up the riches he gathered from reading or reflection in good writings and books of account, which will keep them safe for your use hereafter." Swift, indeed, ridicules the young author with an empty head but a full common-place book; but his sneers, in such a case, carry no weight. "Paradise Lost" was long shaping itself in the mind, aided by notes. A book of thoughts, not extracts, is the great desideratum: thoughts are always of use: facts, like sand, sink to the bottom, after a time. Sydney Smith and Vicesimus Knox pronounced against common-place books, but, on the other side, we have Southey, Locke, and Addison. There can hardly, indeed, be a doubt that a judicious index or record of multifarious reading must keep much within reach that would otherwise escape us.

Watts says that more is gained by writing out once than by reading five times; and Cobbett, who followed this plan with the English and French Grammars, seems to have proved its correctness. Montaigne used to write his opinion of the books he read at the end of them: Young took the clumsy plan of dog-earing: Voltaire, like Coleridge, used to write notes and criticisms on the margin, often adding a double value to the text.

The uses of studies are different in different minds. "Histories make men wise," says Bacon, "Poets, witty; the Mathematics, subtle; Natural Philosophy, deep; Moral, grave; Logic and Rhetoric, able to contend." But it depends on the mind that turns to them. Still, it is certain that a wise adaptation of our reading to mental development is most needful; every faculty and emotion needs exercise. We must discipline our minds as runners their bodies.

The Health is never to be forgotten. To overtask ourselves is to destroy the machine on which all depends. The lament over broken strength as embittering its dearly-bought success, is as old as books. Every University, and many a private home, has to lament the death by overwork of those who gave the fairest promise. It is little that a tree be white in spring if it be upturned by an early storm: the sight of its ruin is only the sadder. We need all the strength we can have to do our work well in the world, for a weak body hinders the strongest mind, or breaks down, like a frail hull with too strong an engine. The thoughts take their cast from the spirits and physical vigour: our very power of attention, and the lucidity of the faculties, rises or falls with our health. Strong manly books are, I apprehend, very commonly the reflection of sound bodily health, as well as of mental.

Two original letters in my possession, of Sir Walter Scott and Thomas Carlyle, enable me to add their notable counsel to what I myself have said. Duly

weighed and expanded, they have the guidance of all lives in them. Their supremely practical air; the thorough shrewdness and common sense in every line, mark a characteristic of the highest geniuses of all ages. Only minute philosophers and mechanical poets can afford to be above the rules of prudence and discretion, and can trust, like the heroes and heroines in romances, to the most improbable deliverances from the foolish dilemmas which want of wit or forethought may have entailed. Some of the truest natures have, indeed, been better able to counsel than to practise, but, theoretically, they have been wise as Eastern Cadis. Shakspeare was practical and prudent as the dullest, else he would never have made the money he did, and died a rich man in Stratford. Then there are Byron, Scott, Sterne, Fielding, Goldsmith, Burns, Southey, Wordsworth, who was even rather mean, I fear, and many besides;—all, wise in words; some in acts, as well. Geniuses are not necessarily fools, nor is the fact of being a fool any proof of inspiration, west of Constantinople, though among the Turks, idiots certainly are looked up to.

Sir Walter's letter is as follows:—

"SIR,—I am favoured with your letter, enclosing some lines to the Memory of Burns which show considerable feeling, and talent for versification. As I am going abroad almost immediately, I cannot profit by the offer you make me of communicating a larger poem, my time being at present occupied with neces-

sary arrangements. In general, I trust I shall not offend you by offering the advice which I myself received in my early youth ; to read a great deal in proportion to what I wrote, or attempted to write. Premature publications have seldom, in the history of Literature, reflected permanent lustre upon the authors, whereas, when the early season of youth has been employed in the selection of information, it has rarely failed to lead the way to the most flattering distinction. I beg you will not suppose that I mean to discountenance your exertions, although I hold it matter of conscience, whenever youth applies for advice, to give it with sincerity. Well-directed ambition, supported by talents and industry, seldom fails to make good its object, and I sincerely wish yours may make you a good poet, and, what is much better, a good and useful member of society.

“I am, Sir,

“Your obedient servant,

“WALTER SCOTT.

“CASTLE STREET, *Sunday*.”

[Post-mark, July 3, 1815. On the eve of Scott's starting to visit the field of Waterloo.]

The second letter, from Thomas Carlyle, sent to a young man, applying for literary counsel, as that of Scott had been, shows clearly enough why so many hold him in such esteem. No man of any recent age has moved the hearts of his generation, and, through the young men, that of the generations rising,

wave behind wave, as Carlyle has, through a long life. I confess to a profound respect for him, and gratitude to him, for no one has more powerfully quickened my nature. If I have had to write a line in which conviction has forced me to differ from so grand a man, I have done so only because, though Cato be dear, truth is dearer.

“CHELSEA, 13th March, 1843.

“DEAR SIR,—Some time ago your letter was delivered me; I take literally the first free half-hour I have had since, to write you a word of answer.

“It would give me true satisfaction, could any advice of mine contribute to forward you in your honourable course of self-improvement; but a long experience has taught me that advice can profit but little; that there is a good reason why ‘advice is so seldom followed,’—this reason, namely, that it is so seldom, and can almost never be, *rightly given*. No man knows the state of another; it is always to some more or less imaginary man that the wisest and most honest adviser is speaking.

“As to the Books which you, whom I know so little of, should read, there is hardly anything definite that can be said. For one thing, you may be strenuously advised to *keep reading*. Any good book, any book that is wiser than yourself will teach you something,—a great many things, indirectly and directly, if your mind be open to learn. This old counsel of Johnson’s is also good and universally applicable: Read the

Book you do honestly feel a wish and curiosity to read. The very wish and curiosity indicates that *you* then and there are the person likely to get good of it. 'Our wishes are presentiments of our capabilities:' that is a noble saying, of deep encouragement to all true men; applicable to our wishes and efforts in regard to reading, as to other things. Among all the objects that look wonderful or beautiful to you, follow with fresh hope the one that looks wonderfulest, beautifulest. You will gradually by various trials (which trials *see* that you make honest, manful ones, not silly, short, fitful ones) discover what is for you the wonderfulest, beautifulest; what is your true element and province, and be able to abide by that. True Desire, the Monition of Nature, is much to be attended to. But here also you are to discriminate carefully between *true* desire and false. The medical men tell us we should eat what we *truly* have an appetite for; but what we only *falsely* have an appetite for, we should resolutely avoid. It is very true. And flimsy, 'desultory' readers, who fly from foolish book to foolish book, and get good of none, and mischief of all,—are not these as foolish, unhealthy eaters, who mistake their superficial, *false* desire after spiceries and confectionaries for the real appetite, of which even they are not destitute, though it lies far deeper, far quieter, after solid nutritive food? With these illustrations I will recommend Johnson's advice to you.

"Another thing, and only one other I will say. All

Books are properly the *record* of the History of Past Men. What *thoughts* Past Men had in them; what actions Past Men did: the summary of all Books whatsoever lies there. It on this ground that the class of Books specifically named *History* can be safely recommended as the basis of all study of Books; the preliminary to all right and full understanding of anything we can expect to find in Books. Past History, and especially the Past History of one's own Native Country: everybody may be advised to begin with that. Let him study that faithfully, innumerable enquiries, with due indications, will branch out from it: he has a broad beaten highway from which all the country is more or less visible; there travelling, let him choose where he will dwell.

"Neither let mistakes nor wrong directions, of which every man in his studies and elsewhere falls into many, discourage you. There is precious instruction to be got by *finding* that we were wrong. Let a man try faithfully, manfully, to be right; he will grow daily more and more right. It is at bottom the condition on which all men have to cultivate themselves. Our very walking is an incessant *falling*: a falling and a catching of ourselves before we come actually to the pavement! It is emblematic of all things a man does.

"In conclusion, I will remind you that it is not by books alone, or by books chiefly, that a man becomes in all points a man. Study to do faithfully whatsoever thing in your actual situation, there and now, you find either expressly or tacitly laid to your charge: that is

your post ; stand in it like a true soldier ; silently devour the many chagrins of it, as all human situations have many ; and be your aim not to quit it without doing all that *it*, at least, required of you. A man perfects himself by work much more than by reading. They are a growing kind of men that can wisely combine the two things ; wisely, valiantly, can *do* what is laid to their hand in their present sphere, and prepare themselves withal for doing other wider things, if such lie before them.

“ With many good wishes and encouragements,

“ I remain yours sincerely,

“ THOMAS CARLYLE.”

One great secret of any right use of books still remains to notice : that we start with healthy principles, honouring the true and the good wherever found, and having no sympathy with the false and wrong. It is a brave and noble heart that is instinctively loyal to the right : that handles Ithuriel's spear, and pricks any lie, wherever met, and however tricked out. The moral sense as it should be, we stand in the centre, and have the Universe, round us, no longer drifting on in confusion, but mapped out in harmonious orbits and revolutions. The eternal laws reveal themselves, then, in Providence, as in Nature. The bow on the clouds is no longer a broken arch, but rounds into a circle.

We need such a temper continually. Genius, success, hypocrisy, or reputation, mislead, if there be

no Lydian stone to try them. It is hard at times to differ from the general voice, and see truth on a cross, and falsehood, instead of holiness, written on the high priest's mitre : hard, amidst trumpet flourishes, and beneath silver robes, and with a loud-throated apotheosis from the crowd, to see that Herod is no God, but a man eaten of worms. Dr. Arnold showed a fine trait in his instant shrinking at the names of such men as Cæsar or Napoleon : their glory not blinding him to their true character. To read of wasted genius, like that of Charles James Fox, without censure, or of a life like that of Wilberforce without admiration, marks want of tone, and loses the moral of both stories. Conscience, intelligent and sensitive, has its part in our studies as much as elsewhere. It abdicates one of its gravest duties, if it do not play the judge on every life and act that comes before it.

But not only does a religious sensibility which courts the full noon save us the shadows and slanting lights which disturb and warp the sight elsewhere : nothing can give us so noble a charity. Bigotry grows on spiritual pride, and that on ignorance. The more we know, the more we learn why we should be both humble and tender. In the great church at Moscow the porch is adorned with portraits of the most eminent sages and philosophers of antiquity ; as if to hint that, though not within the Church, they were still in its outer courts ; and so with the mind nobly religious, though the inner shrine be sacred to names

about which there is no dispute, the good in others is recognised in its approaches.

Let your reading be only a means to an end, and that end, true, manly work for God, and your fellows. Remember in all you do, that, as the earth, in all its heights, and valleys, and stretching plains, has the great sky everywhere over it, so life is rounded by God.

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DREAMS.

LIFE begins, continues, and ends with Dreams, from the sleeping smile in the cradle, to the babbling of the death-bed, as worn-out nature sinks into the last sleep of all. The mind is never at rest, and never was meant to be so. Its restlessness is a law of its being. Like the light, it loses its nature if it stand still, for thought at rest ceases to be, as the luminous ether that makes the day turns into darkness when its undulations cease with the sunset.

Nor are there any bounds or prohibitions as to the sweep of thought, except the limits of its own power. No fence round the mount can keep it back; it attempts to explore all heights and abysses, and is to be honoured in all reverential efforts to do so. Wings were meant for flight, and God made those of the spirit as well as any others. The soul is a commoner of the universe, and wherever it wanders is still in its own domain. As well blame the flame for seeking the sun, as the mind for expatiating through all nature and striving after the unknown. All around, Truth, like a veiled Isis, invites men to lift the veil if they can.

Through all history this noble freedom and grand audacity of our nature has found champions noted above the inglorious multitude of humbler thinkers. In the darkest ages there have never been wanting Galileos to protest against the intellect being enslaved. Through antiquity, in its most distant remoteness, thinkers rise, age after age, to mould the thought of their times and to stimulate that of posterity. Early India has her sages, writing her sacred poems, and embodying subtle speculations of religious philosophy in theories still potent ; Greece borrows her dreams, and from Greece they come down, with modifications and additions of every generation, to the present.

The freedom of thought that marks our day is one of its noblest characteristics. Authority over the mind is relegated, with other exploded follies, to Ariosto's Limbo, and the Divine Right of Priests has gone the way of the Divine Right of Kings. Syllabuses and Encyclicals from whatever Pope, collective or single, are ignored. And men are right in thus pushing them aside. That there *can* be no true authority over thought is conclusive ground that there should be no attempt at it. No pains or penalties can reach the mind. Its secret chambers are sacred to God and ourselves alone ; a calm Holy of Holies in every man, where he can retire, safe from all human power, to commune with the Highest. The spirit lives in an awful solitude, unapproachable, like its Maker. No one can force us to believe, nor can we ourselves do so at our pleasure. The will is servant to the Reason

and the Heart in matters of Faith, and acts at their bidding alone.

Used wisely, this grand independence and liberty has in it the seeds of all progress ; abused, it leads to all extravagance and evil. The discovery of new truth is most precious, but nothing is more hurtful than lawless speculation. In our own day we have both. The restlessness of the mind, never contented with what it has, craves the action, hope, suspense, and excitement of pursuit, rather than acquisition.

"Our hopes like towering falcons aim
At objects in an airy height,
But all the pleasure of the game
Is, afar off, to view the flight." *

Malebranche spoke for many, now, when he said that if he held truth captive in his hand, he would open it again, and let it fly, to have the pleasure of its recapture. Reaction from the imprudence of dogmatism, which by asking us to believe too much has led many to believe too little, has also had great influence in driving men away from Revelation. Once wandering from its sure pathway, they are lured farther and farther by their own fancies, like the traveller in the desert whom a phantom beckons into unknown wastes if he once miss his way.

Differing from them, we must not fall into narrow restrictiveness. We must not only endure toleration, but should feel it. Speculative error does not neces-

* Prior.

sarily affect character. The heart is often sounder than the head, and the life may demand sympathy we must refuse the opinions. Even among Christians, as Coleridge says, the feet may be on the Rock of Ages, while the head is well-nigh anywhere. Bigotry is no sign of strength, nor is contempt any answer to argument. Men are often better than their creeds. It would, indeed, be a pity to think that there were not good men all over the earth. Men are not necessarily bad because they may not be Christians, though they would be so much the better in some ways if they were so. Let us remember that if the white flower alone show the unbroken light, the colours on all are beams from the sun. Night itself is only light asleep, waiting for the morning to set the ether in motion. We may regret that other men do not see as we do, but let us be chary of bitterness. Honest doubt is half-way towards faith. The Jewish apologue, quoted by Jeremy Taylor,* is as true as beautiful. "When Abraham sat at his tent-door, according to his custom, waiting to entertain strangers, he espied an old man stooping and leaning on his staff, weary with age and travail, coming towards him, who was a hundred years of age: he received him kindly, washed his feet, provided supper, caused him to sit down: but, observing that the old man ate and prayed not, nor begged for a blessing on his meat, he asked him why he did not worship the God of Heaven. The old man told him that he worshipped the fire only, and acknowledged

* "Liberty of Prophesying," sec. 22, 3.

no other God. At which answer Abraham grew so zealously angry, that he thrust the old man out of his tent, and exposed him to all the evils of the night, and an unguarded condition. When the old man was gone, God called to Abraham, and asked him where the stranger was: he replied, 'I thrust him away because he did not worship Thee.' God answered him, 'I have suffered him these hundred years though he dishonoured me; and couldst not thou endure him one night when he gave thee no trouble?' Upon this, saith the story, 'Abraham fetched him back again, and gave him hospitable entertainment and wise instruction.' Go thou and do likewise, and thy charity will be rewarded by the God of Abraham."

Speculation has, and can have, only a limited range. All the philosophies of the world fall into a very few classes. Our faculties are the same in all ages, and the facts and laws they can investigate remain for ever unchanged. The same world of consciousness that invites us lay open to the earliest thinkers; the same principles of human action repeat themselves in each generation, and nature is unchanged since the first. Philosophy must move in a circle, and can only combine existing materials if it seek novelty. The ancients have stolen all our best thoughts, ages ago, and the prophets of to-day must be content to borrow the vamped-up systems of the past. New religions, like the leaves of succeeding summers, spring from the decay of those that have gone before.

The one most in vogue in our day is a modified

form of Pantheism—the oldest dream of the mind and heart in religious philosophy. Coming down through immemorial ages from the plains of early India, it has captivated thinkers of different schools, and has coloured many opposite systems. After playing its part in the schools of Greece, it passed into the era of modern philosophy as part of the eclectic fancies of Alexandrian mysticism, through Plotinus and Proclus, and in the writings and teachings of Gnostic sects. At times hardly more than a poetical dream, it has at others shown itself as a dreary Atheism, and while held in some partial way by Christian mystics on the one hand, it has allied itself with all that is most destructive and hurtful in Paganism on the other. You have in Emerson the worst excesses of the school of Hegel. Thomas Carlyle may have, at times, the grand but sad tone of a stoic like Marcus Aurelius; but he distinctly repudiates Pantheism. The elasticity of the system, its apparent novelty, its vagueness, its air of philosophic depth, its room for sentiment and poetry, its very audacity, in some cases—and above all, the literary attractions in which it has been presented, have given it great power for a generation past, especially among young men.

In Mr. Carlyle's case, a lofty earnestness has helped to win over ingenuous minds. Like the old Stoics, he feels life unspeakably real, and never fails to urge the loftiest maxims of morality, and the sacredness of diligent work. Mr. Emerson, on the other hand, tells us that man has to learn "that he is here. not to

work, but to be worked upon"—so that in this, as in many things else, he represents extreme results which are in direct contradiction to Mr. Carlyle's teaching. The two are the best illustrations we have of modern thought, and its most popular teachers, among young men; let us try to see what it really is, especially as expounded most fully by Mr. Emerson. First, however, let me sketch as briefly as possible the modern sources from which he has borrowed. It may be tedious to some to do so, but others will thank me. If you dislike a few pages that must needs be rather dry, you may skip them.

Immanuel Kant, who, first, in modern times, established idealism, or Transcendentalism as it is sometimes called, may be taken as the new source of this philosophic religion, though many intermixtures from other sources, sometimes very different, are found in its utterances. The name Transcendentalism has in it the central idea of Kant's system—meaning, that which transcends or rises above experimental knowledge, and is determined, *à priori*, without argument or proof, in regard to the principles and subjects of human knowledge. His fundamental doctrine is that we know nothing from without, but only from within the mind, and that we know nothing certainly except our own consciousness, that is, that we are. We have *ideas* respecting the appearances around us, but our knowledge of them is simply a knowledge of the forms with which the mind itself clothes them. Of the reality of the apparent objects themselves we can know no-

thing. We act according to the necessity of our constitution, drawing certain conclusions, and these only, from the data nature affords. But that these conclusions, the uniform testimony of our senses, agree with external truth, cannot be proved. If the laws of our mental action were changed, we would, according to Kant, see everything changed around us. Man is the self-complete, independent unit, amidst a universe of shadows.

This principle laid down, Kant found himself charged with Atheism, which he repudiated. It was urged that, if we can know nothing certainly outside ourselves, the existence of God and the great doctrine of man's relation to Him cannot be proved. Revelation, of course, could not be acknowledged, since it must needs come from *without*. Shrinking from the desolation of a universe in which man alone existed, amidst illusions and shadows, with nothing possible to be proved but his own being, he sought to save himself by demanding that the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, and the freedom of the will, be admitted as first truths, as the existence of man himself had been, already. They must be conceded, though they could not be proved, as the necessary basis of a system of morals.

The active faculties of the mind he classed under two great divisions—the Understanding, which finds its fit ministry in inductive study, as of the physical sciences; and, as a far higher agency, what he called Pure Reason—which is to guide us intuitively into

the knowledge of "absolute" truth. Understanding watches and notes the phenomena around us. Pure Reason combines its judgments, and draws general conclusions. Our "conceptions" are derived immediately from experience, and hence may be fitly used in the pursuit of science. But the far nobler office of "Reason" is to generalise its conclusions and create "ideas," which are the appointed means of regulating the "Understanding," which can never, by itself, conduct us to essential truth. Thus, the Understanding is left to the drudgery of life, while "Reason" controls all its higher interests. It is not likely you can follow all this, for Fichte himself, Kant's successor, confesses that he thinks no one can comprehend the great philosopher's writings if he does not know beforehand what they contain. It seems impossible to define authoritatively what "Pure Reason" means. Carlyle tries it, and states a great truth; but Pantheism needs more. "The province of the Understanding," he says, "is of the earth, earthly; it has to do only with real, practical, and material knowledge—mathematics, physics, political economy, and such-like, but must not step beyond. On the other hand, it is the province of Reason to discern virtue, true poetry, or that God exists. Its domain lies in that higher region whither logic or argument cannot reach; in that holier region where poetry, virtue, and divinity abide; in whose presence understanding wavers and recoils, dazzled into utter darkness by that sea of light, at once the fountain and the termination of all

“true knowledge.” * Reason, whatever it be, is to investigate and decide on all religious questions. Our instincts are to be our only standard and source of faith. Vague intuitions and impulses, which differ with education and circumstances, and are coloured, clouded, disturbed, or blighted by a thousand contingencies, are to decide, without appeal, in morals and belief. Such is Kant’s system in its practical bearings. There can be no “Revelation ;” we must be content with the light of our own nature. “The wintry light of the understanding,” “the despotism of the senses,” is to be renounced, and “free and ample leave to be given to the spontaneous sentiment, if we would be great ;” “the low views and utilitarian hardness of men are owing to their working on the world with the understanding only.” “The doors of the temple stand open day and night, before every man, and the oracles of the truth cease never ; yet it is guarded by one condition ; this, namely, it is an intuition.” So says Mr. Emerson. This hard word “intuition” he often interchanges with the more familiar name “genius ;” which may help us a little to the views of the new religion. “The spontaneous intuitions of positive reason,” to use a sentence of Kant’s, “are the *standard in the soul* by which we are to judge the claims of any objects of adoration or article of belief.”

But is it true that reason can create for man a Religion, and that he need be under no obligation

* *Miscellanies*, i. 102, 103.

to his Maker for any help in the matter? If so, why is this grand fact so powerless on mankind? Why have we never seen any proof of its truth in any age? Whence the hideous immorality of antiquity, with all its philosophers? Does the general consciousness of men corroborate this doctrine? Does not the history of the temples, offerings, prayers, priesthood, literature, and public and private life of all the past give it the lie? Everywhere, from all the race, from the beginning, a need of help from above has been owned, and can the speculations of a few philosophers be set over against the agonising confession of a world? Are we to return to what Coleridge calls "the sand-wastes and mirage of a speculative theology," instead of gathering and collating the facts which lie strewn over nature, experience, and revelation? Instead of authoritative statements and sure generalizations are we to use only misty hypotheses and *à priori* dreams? Are we to discard contemptuously, without a hearing, a revelation which has been received as authentic by men of the highest intellect and purest goodness in untold generations? Are we to push aside, without examination, without argument, despising its proffered evidences, and scouting any criticism of its claims, on the dreamy ground of an "intuition," and try to vault into Paradise by the wondrous spring-board of this mental magic?

John Dryden, in his "Religio Laici," puts the claims of Reason in a light as beautiful as it is striking:—

"Dim as the borrowed beams of moon and stars
To lonely, weary, wandering travellers,
Is Reason to the soul; and, as on high,
Those rolling fires discover but the sky,
Not light us here; so, Reason's glimmering ray
Was lent, not to assure our doubtful way,
But guide us upwards to a better day."

Apart from the sad confessions of the heart, and the lessons of universal experience, the results of speculation in Germany, where Christianity has ebbed to the lowest, are enough to keep us from trusting to such a philosopher's stone for our morals or faith. Phaeton has tried his hand again at driving the sun, but has only set the heaven of spiritual truth and law ablaze once more.

As it accepts and rests on Kant's theory of "Pure Reason," so the new religion adopts his teachings on the basis of knowledge, with equal fervour. I must again take Mr. Emerson as its fullest exponent. "A noble doubt," says he, "perpetually suggests itself whether nature outwardly exists. It is a sufficient account of *that appearance we call the world*, that God will teach a human mind, and so make it the receiver of a certain number of *congruent sensations* which we call sun and moon, man and woman, house and trade. In my utter impotence to test the authenticity of the report of my senses, to know whether the impressions they make on me correspond with outlying objects, what difference does it make whether Orion is up there in heaven, or some god paints the image on the firmament of the soul?" "Nature is a phenomenon,

not a substance ;" the universe is "the great apparition shining so peacefully on us." He mixes and confounds the teachings of opposite schools into a mysterious jargon at which common sense must smile. Read the words again, and they will need no reply.

After Kant came Fichte as the next hierarch of German philosophy. Checked by no such fear of consequences as Kant, he at once discarded the fundamental truths that philosopher had assumed as necessary, while confessing their incapability of proof. He reduces our only certain knowledge to that of our own existence, which he granted as a first truth. The formula of Descartes—"Cogito, ergo sum," "I think, therefore I am"—was virtually the motto of Fichte. But the absolute solitude of man in the universe, thus implied, left its countless phenomena unexplained. The empty infinite must be filled with at least the appearance of intelligent force, and for this Pantheism offered the needed help. Cherished for immemorial ages along the ancient rivers of the East, it had come westward before the days of Plato, and had been through the history of early philosophy the favourite doctrine of the few, while Polytheism held the mass. Its dreamy vagueness, and the scope it gives for sentiment, has always made it attractive with some, but it is too abstract and impractical ever to reach mankind at large. In modern times it owes its revival in Western Europe mainly to Spinoza, from whom Fichte borrowed and introduced it into current philosophy once again. As a middle position between the accept-

ance of a personal god and the black vacuity of Atheism, he adopted the Pantheistic doctrine of one absolute existence in all things—in the ME, that is, in man; and in the NOT ME, that is, the universe at large—an undefined and undefinable essence pervading all things, like Plato's soul of the world. Man and creation were thus alike conceded a spiritual existence; not a material, however. A pervading soul, one in man and in the universe around, was the single mysterious fact admitted. Of this all-inhabiting force, man is the highest manifestation, and consequently above all the universe outside himself. A revelation is hence a contradiction, since man is himself the supreme embodiment of the Divine. It is an affront to our nature to speak of it.

Schelling came next, and pushed Pantheism still further. Not only are the mind and external nature, according to him, only parts of the one universal existence—he claimed for "intuition" that it taught that man, as the highest manifestation of the Divine principle, learns in the working of his own thought the secret of this principle; that is, that thought is the same as creation, so that what we see is only an humbler repetition by nature of what we do in all the processes of the mind. Man is raised high over the universe as the Supreme Intelligence, that is, as God.

The mantle of philosophy next rested on the shoulders of Hegel, whose jungle of metaphysical refinements has seemed so much in advance of all before, that his disciples have applied to him the

words, "When that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away." Not willing to grant even the solitary postulate of our own being, he started from the gloomy premises that neither the existence of the world nor our own can be certainly known. All that we are sure of lies in the relations between the mind and what it looks at. To form an idea there must be two opposites. If you think of a tree, both the tree and the mind are required, and from the relation of the two the idea of the tree rises. Ideas thus derived are the only realities in the universe. But as man alone is capable of this creation of ideas, which are only another word for thought, he is God. Thought is the only existence, and as man alone thinks, there is no other God but human thought, which, moreover, is continually developing and advancing. Our thought and God are two names for the same things.

Here, then, we have reached the highest flight of Transcendentalism, and it gives us a universe in which ideas alone are real, and the human mind is the only God. Man, a dream, looks out on a world of dreams! Pantheism developed to its final results leaves us in universal scepticism, or rather reasons everything out of existence, unless the ghosts called ideas be reckoned as substances.

It is hard to put such abstract speculations in simple words, and I know not whether I have been able to do it altogether correctly or clearly, for even Germans have their sects of interpreters of the same

teacher. De Quincey affirms that fully a thousand books have been written to clear up what Kant is supposed to have meant, and his successors are by no means less misty. With the development of Hegelianism I shall not trouble you, but you will see presently how the systems I have noticed are the fountains from which our English Pantheism has filled its urn.

Thus, in Mr. Emerson's writings, along with Kant's Idealism, we have all the varying dreams of his pantheistic successors. He believes in no intelligent existence but man, and that the universe is only the reflection of our own thoughts from so many shadows and apparitions. Rejecting a personal god, he takes man as the highest manifestation of the Divine, though he shares it in common with all creation, living and dead. Like the Germans, he seeks in the language of India statements of his theory which are not to be found any way nearer. Jesus Christ is a far more lightly esteemed authority with him than Krishna, and the Bible is nothing alongside the Vedas and Puranas. He lets Vishnu, a member of the Hindoo Triad, speak for him thus, "The whole world is but the manifestation of Vishnu, who is identical with all things, and is to be regarded by the wise as not differing from, but as the same as themselves. I neither am going nor coming; nor is my dwelling in any one place; nor art thou, thou; nor are others, others; nor am I, I." "As if," says he, "he had said, All is for the soul, and the soul is Vishnu; and animals and stars are transient paintings, and light is

whitewash . . . and heaven itself a decoy." Elsewhere he gives his estimate of himself, thus: "I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part and parcel of God." Can you make any sense of this? Is there any sense in it?

It is a favourite theme with our new religion that whatever is not new in our faith is worthless, as if morals grew old and truth decayed. Carlyle exalts the Bible, but hardly makes it a rule of faith. Mr. Emerson asks "why we should grope among the dry bones of the past, or put the living generation into masquerade out of its faded wardrobe?" but it is an awkward question for himself after his quotations from Vishnu and the like as his confessions of faith. To reject the Bible as old and then turn to Hindooism provokes a smile.

The new creed heartily adopts Hegel's deification of man. "Empedocles," says Mr. Emerson, "undoubtedly spoke a truth of *thought* when he said, 'I am God.'" "That which shews God outside of me makes me a wart and a wen." "So much of nature as man is ignorant of, so much of *his own mind* does he not yet possess." There is indeed no reality but human thought—all we see is but an appearance and dream; our ideas are the only truth; they are the one divine fact—that is, God. There is no God besides man. This is the reasoning—not very much worth after all—by which Mr. Emerson follows Hegel like his shadow.



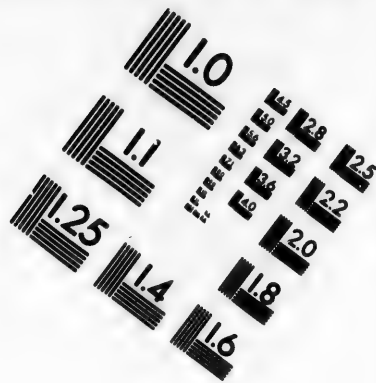
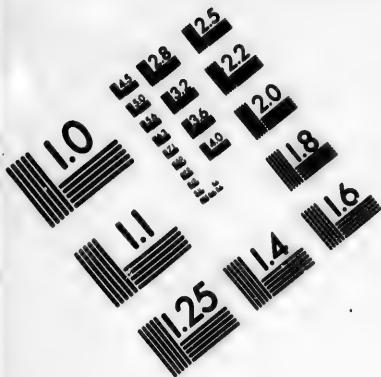
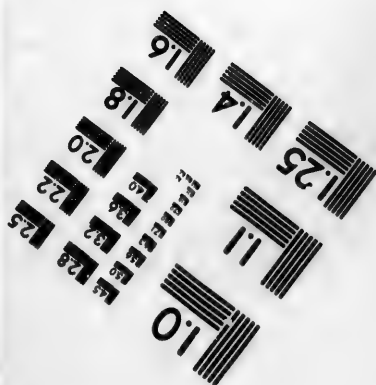
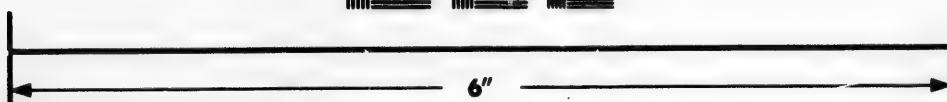
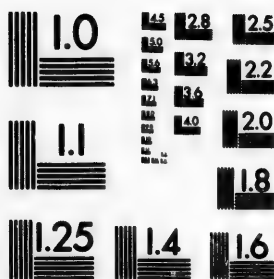


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"In his mind all creation is duly respected
As parts of himself—just a little projected ;
And he's willing to worship the stars and the sun,
A convert to—nothing but Emerson.
Life, Nature, Love, God, and affairs of that sort,
He looks at as merely ideas ; in short,
As if they were fossils stuck round in a cabinet,
Of such vast extent that our earth's a mere dab in it ;
Composed just as he is inclined to conjecture her,
Namely, one part pure earth, ninety-nine parts pure lecturer."•

The new religion, having turned its back on Revelation, finds no rest in any one system. It wears a motley show of speculation, borrowed, like Falstaff's linen, from a great many hedges. Germany will not do without the addition of India. As Lord Houghton said of Harriet Martineau, it believes anything, provided it be not in the Bible. It is half inclined to believe in Transmigration. As the Brahmin fancies he existed in other forms on earth before the present life, and that, unless specially pleasing to Brahma, he will have still further migrations hereafter, so Mr. Emerson speaks of "the Deity sending each soul into nature, to perform one more turn through the circle of beings"—language which a Hindoo would think very orthodox. "The soul," says he, "having been often born, is, as the Hindoos say, 'travelling the path of existence through thousands of births'—having beheld the things which are here, those which are in heaven, and those which are beneath, there is nothing of which she has not gained the knowledge ; no wonder

• J. R. Lowell.

that she is able to recollect, in regard to anything, what she formerly knew." This is simply the Brahmin doctrine of Transmigration, jumbled up with the fancy of Socrates—his long-vanished dream of Reminiscence, dead these two thousand years, but raised again to turn a sentence, and add a touch of mysteriousness.

There is something very sad in the following confession of darkness and ignorance, after all the wild talk of our being "part of God," as to our future destiny. "I cannot tell if these wonderful qualities which house to-day in this mortal frame, shall ever re-assemble in equal activity in a similar frame, or whether they have before had a natural history like that of this body you see before you; but this one thing I know, that these *qualities* did not now begin to exist, cannot be sick with my sickness, nor buried in any grave; but that they circulate through the universe." The confidence of one page is lost in the other; bold dogmatizing fades into timorous doubt, until we are left by this new dispensation in blank ignorance and uncertainty as to eternity. John Sterling can only shut out the questions that meet him in his slow-dying, and "sit on the lid" till he has found the answer, beyond. Emerson, hoping at one moment for transmigration and final absorption, falters the next, and owns that the darkness is too deep for his vision. Compared with this, how grand was the dream of Socrates, when he saw a beautiful and majestic woman, clad in white, approaching him as he lay in prison, about to die, cheering him by the words,

"Socrates, three days hence you will reach fertile Phthia."* But especially, compared to this, how unspeakably grand the composure with which Christianity looks on death, and turns the close of life into a triumph! Set over against it the chant of St. Paul, like the cry of Land after a weary and stormy voyage, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." How immeasurably nobler, more consoling, and more true to the instinctive longings of nature, than to be coldly told, "The individual is ascending out of his limits into a catholic existence," or that "Death is but the return of the individual to the infinite." It is a poor result of so much philosophy, to tell me that I am like a raindrop, destined presently to fall into the ocean; or, like a wave rising from the great waste of waters, never distinct from them, and even now sinking back into their bosom. It is little to me to be told that, though I must cease to be, nature will continue the same, and that all that lives is only a cloud, which the ocean gave, but will soon reclaim, or that all the universe, seen and unseen, is like the little shells cast out from the depths of the shoreless sea; seen for an hour—but to be washed back again by retiring tides. If not in these words, at least in their full meaning, our new religion annihilates man and makes

* A name, from a fertile district of Greece, for a region of future happiness.

Nature an unconscious soul—an unintelligent Intelligence!

Freedom of the will, which alone redeems our nature from mere mechanical instincts, and makes us at once accountable and rational, has no place in this school. Since "the human race is God in distribution," no power from without can influence us either for good or evil. We must act, by a necessity of our constitution, as we do, and since we have no separate personality, we can have neither control nor responsibility. "Let man learn," says Mr. Emerson, "that he is here, not to work, but to be worked upon." "The Spiritualist"—that is, not the Spirit-Rapper, but the Idealist of Mr. Emerson's school—"cannot bring himself to believe either in Divine Providence or in the immortality of the soul." This ghastly gospel knows no hope. For immortality it gives us annihilation; for moral freedom it proclaims only the irresponsible working of blind machines; and for Providence we have Fate, which grows over us like grass"—that is, as the grass grows over the helpless dead! Is this the new revelation? Nothing beyond this life, and nothing in it better than to be crushed under the wheels of inexorable destiny! It reminds one of the agonies of the old Roman epitaphs, in which broken hearts and crushed hopes, in their poor Pagan desolation, bewail and reproach cruel death and remorseless doom. For ourselves, we prefer the God and the future of Christianity.

The different qualities of actions necessarily cease

with the extinction of free will. To do right, or to do wrong, carries no blame. As with the old Stoics, evil is a misfortune, or a disease of the mind, as fever might be of the body. Indeed, Mr. Emerson plainly tells us that there is no such distinction as that of right and wrong. "Ethics," he says, "degrade nature," as does also "religion." "The less we have to do with our sins the better." "Evil is good in the making—the Divine effort is never relaxed; the carrion in the sun will convert itself into grass and flowers; and man, *though in brothels, or gaols, or on gibbets, is on his way to all that is good and true.*" A fine world this would make, if acted on! After this, "Queen Mab" and "Don Juan" ought to be submitted to the Religious Tract Society as eminently moral. What parallel is there between carrion turning to flowers, and the relations of vice to virtue? Carrion and flowers are the same matter in different combinations; the one is as good as the other of its kind; but evil and good are opposites. To say that the west is the east "in making," or that cold is heat in "the making," or darkness, light, would be to the point, but not the absorption by a plant of its appropriate food. We are favoured with repeated warnings against thinking that there is anything in a worthy life. "Nature," we are told—that is, all the god there is—"is *no saint*. . . . She comes eating and drinking and *sinning*. Her darlings, the great, the strong, the beautiful, are not children of the law, do not come out of the Sunday-school, nor weigh their food, nor punctually keep the

commandments." The entertainment of the "proposition of depravity," it seems, "is the last profligacy and profanation." What can all this mean? Do "ethics"—that is, principles of morals—"degrade nature?" If so, no virtue should be taught; no duty insisted on. Henceforth, cannibals and philosophers alike are to look upon morals as a degradation of their nature. They may act wisely or selfishly, if they like, for their own good, but there is no right and wrong to guide them. Thomson was right in speaking of God as "from seeming evil still educing good," but to say that evil and good are two names for the same thing, is an outrage on all our moral instincts. If it be true that man, though in brothels, or gaols, or on gibbets, is on his way to all that is good and true, morality is of no account, vice is as good as virtue; theft, and all crime, as good as their opposites, and it is as well for a man to die by the halter after a life of infamy, as to end life in honour after a career of public and private excellence! But, however this Atheistic Fatalism may shock most people, Mr. Emerson not only teaches it in words of his own, but enforces it by a quotation from his favourite Indian divinity, Vishnu:—"I am the same to all mankind. There is not one who is worthy of my love or hatred. They who serve me with adoration, I am in them and they in me. If one whose ways are altogether evil, serve me alone, he is as respectable as the just man; he is altogether well employed; he soon becometh of a virtuous spirit, and obtaineth eternal happiness." It may seem hard to

simple minds to conceive how any god can be served by "ways which are wholly evil"—the new religion sees no difficulty. Is crime as much worship as virtue? or, if it ape the postures and words of religion, is that enough? In the one case, the universal sentiment of mankind is outraged; in the other, you have hypocrisy, or sound, count as much as sincerity.

No rites or forms of worship of any kind can be expected from a philosophy which gathers into one the worst and the best, with equal approval. Very general instructions alone can be given. We are to let our hearts throb with the throbbing heart of nature, and to commune with the spirits of the stars, and woods, and fields; but what this means we are not informed more closely. One passage alone seems clear enough to quote. "To lead a heavenly life, one is to listen with insatiable ears to the voice which speaks to us from behind, till he rises to an ecstatic state, and becomes careless of his food and of his house, and is the fool of ideas." Or he is "to go and be dumb, and sit with his hands on his mouth, a long, austere Pythagorean lustrum." Christianity says—"Work;" the new religion substitutes mystic dreaming for the healthful medicine of action. To get so heated, it is not said with what, as to forget one's meals, or family duties, and to be the fool of ideas, and, having reached this vacant idiotcy, to sit dumb, with our hands on our mouth for five years, is surely little better than the rule of the Bhagavad Gita—the favourite book of the Hindoos, which Mr. Emerson

frequently quotes—that the devotee who can sit for days looking at the point of his nose and thinking of nothing has reached religious perfection.

It might be expected that the new religion wholly rejects such restraints as the positive morals of the Bible. Churches and Sunday-schools are only food for a sneer, and benevolent associations only so many modes of folly. Prayer is supremely ridiculous. "The dull pray, geniuses are light mockers." The Brahmins of this creed, like their brethren in the East, think him who turns from all other duties that he may give himself up to meditation on Om, a holier man than the pilgrim who wearily toils from afar to fulfil the prescriptions of his faith. "A heavenly life," it appears, is no longer one adorned by practical godliness and breathing its spirit, but the falling into reveries at a landscape, and working ourselves into raptures of sentiment over it.

As all things are only conjurers' counters which may pass for each other without notice, we have startling results in science. We are gravely informed that the reason why natural philosophers know about the substances which they study, is that they are *identical with them*. "*Animated chlorine* knows of chlorine, and animated zinc knows of zinc. Their qualities make his career, and he can variously publish their virtues, *because they compose him*." Perhaps this is an illustration in Mr. Emerson's own case of what he means by a man "becoming the fool of ideas;" certainly it illustrates Addison's theory, that only a

thin membrane, sometimes invisible, decides whether one be ranked in that hapless class or turn out a philosopher.

It is a favourite habit with this school to throw the reader off his guard by retaining the words of Scripture when their sense is totally changed ; another, to claim for heathenism, and every other system by turns, the same morality, or even doctrines, as Christianity. We are told that Christianity is in Plato's *Phædo*, though any one who has read it knows that it gives, at best, only a dim glimpse of our immortality. But assertion goes for proof with the mass.

A depth of reverential feeling, and a solemnity of thought in the presence of great truths, are marks of all lofty minds. Subdued sorrow runs like low music through real genius. Carlyle shows a deep and earnest sadness in all that concerns the future life, tempered only by strong faith in the goodness of God—a sadness only becoming in a world where "evil, grief, horror, shame, follies, errors, and frailties of all kinds, press on the eye and heart." But Mr. Emerson, like Theodore Parker, can treat all that happens to come in his way lightly. He is not awed even by the idea of God, which hushes most men into a reverent silence. He speaks of "God's grand politeness," as if audacity was in place in such a connection. Contrast with this Jonathan Edwards, in spite of his unimaginative cast, so filled with the sense of the Divine Majesty—as he tells us—that he would sit and sing in a low voice to himself in the fields. Or take

Milton's hymn put into the mouth of our great parent Adam—which Burke's son died in repeating—or take any of the utterances of lofty souls when gazing on the Divine glory, and the contrast is complete. The new religion quenches the imagination and poisons the heart. With nothing nobler than man or grander than the present, it is chained to the earth, and has only a ghastly smile where faith glows like a seraph. Bad taste and inability to conceive a grand ideal mark both Emerson and Parker. Jesus is a "*hero*," says Emerson, and "we cloy of him as of all such ; if we get too much of Him He becomes a *bore at last*." "The universe," we are told, "has three children, which reappear under different names in every system of human thought, whether they be called Cause, Operation, and Effect ; or, more poetically, Jove, Neptune, Pluto ; or, theologically, the Father, the Spirit, and the Son." Another flower of his rhetoric is as follows : "Meantime, there are not wanting gleams of a better light—occasional examples of the action of man upon nature with his entire force, with reason as well as understanding. Such examples are the traditions of miracles in the earliest antiquity of all nations ; the history of Jesus Christ ; the achievements of a principle, as in political and religious revolutions, and in the abolition of the slave trade ; the miracles of Swedenborg, Hohenlohe, and the Shakers ; many obscure and yet contested facts, now arranged under the name of animal magnetism ; prayer, eloquence, self-healing, and the wisdom of children." How

candid, how delicate, to class together Jesus Christ, Prince Hohenlohe, Anne Lee, and the Spirit-Rappers! How full of profound reflection and wisdom the whole sentence!

Having heard from the lips of its chief apostle the doctrines and characteristics of the new religion—what shall we say of it? Can we accept it as true when tried at the bar of philosophy itself? Assuredly we cannot. The same process of thought by which it reaches the belief that self exists, carries us on to the idea of a great first cause. Pantheism is the first step in an argument, with the rest a-wanting, and stands useless as a broken arch. Does it satisfy the demands of the imagination in things of religion—those demands which are pictures reflected from the heart on the brain? Assuredly not. "It is a stream without a spring, a tree without a root, a shadow projected by no substance, a sound without a voice, a drama without an author, a pervading thought without a thinking mind, a universe without a God." Do its doctrines meet any better fate when tried by the standard to which they appeal, "the moral sentiment" of the race? The testimony in each of us to the prevalence of law, the obligation of right, the consequences of wrong, the perpetual government of an invisible God, the need of redemption, and the inexpressible grandeur and fitness of the revealed future, frown down the monstrous untruthfulness of its theology and morals.

Is it desirable, or is it not, that this philosophy be accepted as better than Christianity, or should we still

cleave to the old? At the risk of repetition, let me recapitulate the leading features of both. If, then, we turn to the scope of their teaching, they differ at once. Pantheism does not preach to the mass, but rather affects to despise the rudeness and ignorance which seek proof as a ground of belief. Culture is to bring about the reign of the good and the true. It is to quicken the sensibilities and fit for that intuitive insight which reads the most hidden truths at a glance, and it does not hope to be understood where that is wanting. Christianity addresses itself to man as a whole, and claims his acceptance on the strength of its evidence. Philosophy never raised either a tribe or a nation; Christianity has clothed the naked savage, given him language form and system, given him a spade for a war-club, sent his children to school, and led himself from degraded ferocity to gentleness, honour, and love. The god of Pantheism is a vast dreamy abstraction—incapable of definition—a mere apotheosis of collective man, with no sympathy between him and a Higher to direct his will, form his character, or attract his love. Christianity discloses a Father in the heavens, the Archetype of all Fatherhood, with open hand, benignant eye, loving voice, and a care for us that never slumbers nor sleeps. Pantheism never thinks of directing us to its god for comfort, or hope, or confidence in trial; Christianity tells us that Jehovah is the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, the Father of mercies, and the God of all consolation. ✓

Indeed, in the craving of the soul in all countries after a personal god—a craving so intense that, even in India, the native home of Pantheism, Rajah Rammohun Roy declared that Polytheism, which gives every man a personal god of his own, is a deep and sincere belief—and in the perfect counterpart to every want of the spirit found in the Scripture conception of God, lie a sufficient refutation of Pantheism, and vindication of Revelation. Voltaire's saying is right—"Si Dieu n'existait pas, il faudrait l'inventer" ("if God did not exist, it would be needful to invent him"). Pantheism tells us that in sounding the depths of one man's thoughts, we sound the depths of the universe—that if we know ourselves, we know all the secrets of being. Our instinctive sense recoils from the assertion. Christianity, on the other hand, chords with our innate conviction in asking, instead, who can, by searching, find out God? Pantheism is opposed throughout to the moral sense of mankind: its one ceaseless hum is that man is all to himself—Law, Lord, Saviour, God, the Universe. Thus, at a sweep it destroys all the relations we would bear to a personal god. It preaches Fate; Christianity whispers Providence. It abolishes all moral government, confounds the qualities of actions, obliterates right and wrong, obedience and sin, from the vocabulary—dismisses all responsibility from human acts, since they are the inevitable outgrowth of nature and destiny, and since man, having no personality, can have no obligation. The best and the worst are one before Pantheism. The

deceived and deceiver are both divine. We recoil from a thought so shocking. Christianity, on the other hand, speaks the conviction of the heart in its high morality, and its demand for holiness as the condition of seeing God. It has the response of our bosoms in warning the sinner, and holding aloft the reward of righteousness. Pantheism scoffs at mediation. Humanity, by the fire on ten thousand altars, craves it, and Christianity offers it. Pantheism offers no code, no rules for our guidance towards God and our neighbour, condemns the practical, honours rhapsodies, vagaries, and impulses; or, if it preach work, has no living principles to induce it. Christianity is sober and practical, and turns to whatever can alleviate sorrow, or bless and raise, while her precepts embrace the whole circle of human relationship. Pantheism has no future to which to invite us, or by the prospect of which to cheer us. Absorption, as when a raindrop falls on the ocean, is the fate of all. Christianity speaks to the innermost soul of the race in opening the gates of immortality and letting the light from beyond stream down on our footsteps. There is no better test of a system than its fulness to help when human help is vain. In life we may dream our theories; dying is the experiment that proves their worth. If any one wish to see man alone in the hour of trial, let him read the last letter of John Sterling to Mr. Carlyle, to which I have alluded already. Mr. Carlyle had had great influence over him, as his bosom friend, and is now

told by the dying man—"Certainty I have none ; and I have nothing better for it, but to keep shut the lid of those secrets, with all the weights in my power." But, as Mr. Carlyle's vagueness is not Mr. Emerson's Pantheism, even this dreary letter would not be enough for one of his disciples in the hour of death. Contrast with this agonising uncertainty—with the poor human bravery that tries to keep down the lid of the future—the triumph of having death swallowed up in victory, and all tears wiped from off all faces. Compare its darkness and unspeakable sadness with the Christian picture of Bunyan—one tintured by no philosophy—with his bad spelling, his life in jail, and only a homespun trust in the word of God. Remember the legend he saw glittering over the gates of the celestial city, "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Listen to the sight of its glories : "Now just as the gates were opened to let in the men, I looked in after them, and, behold, the city shone like the sun, the streets also were paved with gold ; and in them walked many men, with crowns on their heads, palms in their hands, and golden harps to sing praises withal." To shoot out into infinite darkness and keep as brave a heart as may be, as its unknown possibilities approach, is all Pantheism can do to soften a dying pillow. Christianity sheds on that of a dying saint the splendours of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away ; fills

his soul with the fall of immortal music, and makes dissolution only a gentle wafting to immortal life. Which of the two speaks most strongly to our wants and longings? Let us pay our regards to that which adds another world to this, and weaves roses and amaranths for our brows when we reach it.

It is a striking enforcement of humility to find philosophy fail so utterly in making a new religion. It would be well for all who claim to guide their fellows in things so weighty, to remember and receive the conclusion of one who searched for truth with an earnestness from which our modern faith-makers might take a lesson. I mean Socrates, who sums up, in his "Apology," the experience of his life, in the declaration that Apollo had taught him this one thing, that human wisdom was worth little or nothing. Better than the dream of genius, or the intuitions of pure reason; better than the world without a God, without a conscience, without immortality, though ever so philosophically proved, is the trust of the veriest babe in whom God has perfected praise. Nobler than the loftiest deification of man, grander than that he should be dignified with the most sounding titles, is the prayer of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner." I set up against our new religionists the picture of Cowper's Cottager, and leave you to say whether she or they be the brighter mirror of the highest truth:—

"Yon Cottager, who weaves at her own door,
Pillow and bobbins all her little store,

Content though mean, and cheerful, if not gay,
Shuffling her threads about the livelong day,
Just earns a scanty pittance, and, at night,
Lies down secure, her heart and pocket light;
She, for her humble sphere by nature fit,
Has little understanding, and no wit,
Receives no praise; but though her lot be such
(Toilsome and indigent) she renders much;
Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true,
(A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew),
And in that charter reads with sparkling eyes,
Her title to a treasure in the skies.
O happy peasant! O unhappy bard!
His the mere tinsel, hers the rich reward:
He, praised, perhaps, for ages yet to come
She, never heard of half a mile from home
He, lost in errors his vain heart prefers,
She, safe in the simplicity of hers."

FAREWELL.

A PREFACE stands at the beginning of a book, like a Host at the door of his Inn, to welcome all comers. As I do not intend to write one, I can only bid my Reader, Farewell, now, as I leave him, and I do so with as many good wishes as Erasmus has packed into his Colloquy on Salutations.

But Farewell, between lovers, means anything rather than a summary leaving, and so in this case. I have something to add before we part company.

I have spoken of the helps to a religious life; there is one on which far too much stress is laid by not a few. The revived mediævalism which, in the last thirty years, has spread over all Europe, from Russia to Spain, has affected Britain as well. Ecclesiastical architecture and ornament; church music; the ritual of public worship; and externalism generally, have passed from the closets of students to be great public questions. The neglect into which they had fallen from puritan times has been avenged by a reaction, which has affected not only episcopacy, but even nonconformity and presbyterianism, as well. The

humblest sects have felt its influence: the Anglican Church is at this moment convulsed by it.

The right use of art and symbol in religion is thus one of the weightiest inquiries of our day.

To return to the rude simplicity and bad taste of the past is as impossible as it is undesirable. Nothing slovenly or vulgar can be permitted in the worship of God. To have His house forbidding in itself, or its engagements, while our own is the reverse, is unworthy. The gold and frankincense and myrrh are due to the Saviour at God's right hand, no less than they were when He lay in the cradle at Bethlehem. We must break the alabaster box, still, over His feet. The Lord of all that is fair, in earth or heaven, has a right to the beautiful in His temple and service.

Still, it is clear that material or sensuous beauty is by no means the highest to God: the spiritual beauty of the soul is unspeakably nobler. To have the one at the cost of the other would be no honour to Him, but much the reverse. Art consecrated to His service must not affect us as Art; its place is, rather, to help towards a worthier worship. But it may hinder instead of assisting, if it attract to itself the thoughts that should rise to the spiritual; the soul of worship may be sacrificed to its mere form and accessories.

True The only right use of Art in religion is when it is the outward expression of truths felt by the heart. By itself, it is dead, and, instead of lifting the spirit to God, drags it down to a mere superstition. External beauty or harmony, to be other than distracting and

hurtful, must be the counterpart of a grander beauty and harmony in the spirit; the visible notes of soul music; the faint realisation of heavenly dreams and thoughts within.

Merely formal, it becomes the handmaid of sensuous excitement, and intellectual pleasure, alone, stirring the feelings, perhaps, but, instead of freeing and elevating the mind and heart, only gilding their chains, and casting a veil of sentiment over their earthliness.* But need I say, that all Art or symbol, used as the vehicle or aid of religion, is exposed to this misuse? We are prone to rest in the outward, and put it in the place of the Ideal. Art becomes the object rather than the medium of worship. We are the slaves of our senses, and are prone to stop short, with illusions that please them, instead of rising to the unseen or spiritual. A purely spiritual worship is indeed impossible; there must be material or sensuous helps; but we are always ready to lower our conceptions from the divine, if the human obtrudes itself. The image becomes the idol; the music, the religion; high architectural Art makes all around artificial. The very word Art implies a contrast to reality.

The most deeply religious ages have always perceived this tendency, and have, hence, been either indifferent to Art, or opposed to it. The early Christians abjured it, and even in Tertullian's day, two hundred years after Christ, it was denounced as idolatry. The

* See on this, Ulrici's Article—*Mensch*, in Herzog's *Encyclopädie*, v. 9, 359.

Monkish Reformers of the Middle Ages were equally earnest against it. A pure and noble genius like St. Bernard opposed it no less than the rude monks of Egypt, six hundred years earlier. He speaks with a grand enthusiasm against the Art introduced into the churches of his day, as fatal to spiritual religion. Nothing satisfies us at present but Gothic Architecture and ornament ; he has no words to express his aversion to it. The immense height of the churches, their immoderate length, their superfluous breadth, costly polishing, and strange designs, grieve him to the heart. "The beautiful," says he, "is more admired than the sacred is revered:" words true of more ages than his. The ornaments of the walls and roofs he cannot away with ; the disgusting monkeys, ferocious lions, horrible centaurs, spotted tigers, and nameless monsters, human and bestial.* The Puritans had the same dislike of the Arts in religion, nor have they ever found favour in this relation, where men were thoroughly earnest. Their development in connection with worship runs parallel with the decay of a spiritual faith, and the growth of a weak and gross superstition, as if they were parasites, adorning for a time, but, in the end, hiding and killing the tree to which they had clung, or bright-coloured fungi, growing only on fallen and decayed spirituality. Youth abhors such religious cosmetics : age employs them to conceal its defects. In our own day, John

* His diatribe against the Abbey at Cluny. Bernard's time may be remembered as A.D. 1111.

Maskin, the greatest Art-critic Britain has seen, writes —“The more I have examined the subject, the more dangerous have I found it to dogmatize respecting the character of the Art which is likely, at a given period, to be most useful to the cause of religion. One great fact first meets me. . . . I never met with a Christian whose heart was thoroughly set upon the world to come, and, so far as human judgment could pronounce, perfect and right before God, who cared about Art at all.”* Thomas Carlyle, in his fierce way, puts it even more broadly. “May the devil fly away with the Fine Arts, exclaimed confidentially, once, in my hearing, one of our most distinguished public men; a sentiment that often recurs to me. I perceive too well how true it is in our case. A public man, intent on any real business, does, I suppose, find the Fine Arts rather imaginary . . . feels them to be a pretentious nothingness; a confused superfluity and nuisance, purchased with cost—what he, in brief language, denominates a bore.”†

That Churches should turn to painted windows, high roofs, scientific music, and the like, as their attractions, shows disease both inside and out. Good taste is imperative, but theatrical effect is a mockery of the Eternal. Dilettanteism in His service is a Dance of Death. The House of God is a most solemn fact: not an Italian Opera, or Philharmonic Hall, or sacred Drury Lane. Scenic display in the building or

* Stones of Venice, ii. 103.

† Latter-Day Pamphlets, Jesuitism, 34.

service is a travesty on all that is grand in Christianity ; a degradation of its high mysteries to the level of pagan and barbarous follies. But externalism is not confined to what appeals to the eye. How much better is scientific singing to which the congregation come as to a performance? Many go to Churches confessedly, only to hear the singing or playing. They forswear their creed to amuse their ears, but are often lured much farther than they intended. Neither eyes nor ears are part of the soul. Let Jesuitism, Romish or Protestant, turn its worship into a play ; keep aloof from it. Let its call-birds sing as they may ; they do so to beguile you into the hand of the fowler. If Art be the temptation anywhere, it neutralises all good.

Spirit and Truth :—the reflex of the Divine nature, alone make true worship : not incense burning ; nor masquerading in church cloaks and tippets ; nor mumming and posturing. Spirit and Truth ; not singers trilling their quavers, nor high scientific music of any kind ; nor painted windows, with lying legends, or barbarous distortions of glass saints and apostles. The soul can rise to God from the bare hill-top, or from an upper room ; but it is apt to be kept below by too great attractions of sight and sound. It is the heart that makes the music that God likes, after all ; the beauty of holiness is the best robe for people and priest ; and the best glory of any temple is the felt presence of God.*

* Schleiermacher's words are, unfortunately, as true to-day as when first written fifty years ago :—"From of Old, Faith has

I have urged a manly freedom of thought, but it is thought that, like Noah's dove, ranges abroad only to return to its rest when wearied. Lessing's famous saying, that "if the Eternal Father held in His right hand the Truth, in His left, the striving after it, and he had to choose between them, he would clasp His knees, and say, Father, the left,*—can be accepted only of intellectual truth. Spiritual truth, once found, becomes part of ourselves, as the colours, woven into their tissues by the light, do of the flowers. The heart seeks rest: only the head seeks excitement and change. "Philosophy is not philosophy," says Cousin, "if it do not touch the abyss; but it ceases to be philosophy if it fall into it."† Use your liberty Christianly: let it be first Christian and then free. Be less given to speculation than practice:

never been general: all along, a few have known Religion, while millions have only played endless fantastic tricks with the wrappings in which they have dressed her, to which she, sadly smiling, submits."—Denn schon von Alters her ist der Glaube nicht jedermanns Ding gewesen; und immer haben nur Wenige die Religion erkannt, indess Millionen auf mancherlei Art, mit den Umhüllungen gaukelten, welche sie sich lächelnd gefallen lässt. —Reden über die Religion.

Alfred Vaughan, in his *Hours with the Mystics*, says well—"that the introduction of art into religion ends, not by art becoming religious, but by religion becoming an art."

* Wenn der Ewige Vater in der Rechten die Wahrheit hielte, in der Linken das Streben danach, und ich sollte wählen, ich würde seine kniee umfassen und sprechen: Vater, die Linke!

† La Philosophie n'est pas philosophie si elle ne touche à l'abîme; mais elle cesse d'être philosophie, si elle y tombe.

cultivate faith rather than doubt; peace of heart rather than any subtle inquiries. The holiest spot to the sinner is the foot of the Cross; from the height of Calvary he can look round on all things through clear air.

Remember, work, not retirement, is your duty and safety. It is a weakly religion that needs to keep itself shut up by timid restraints. It was a wise act and saying of Meletius, of Antioch, on finding Simeon Stylites chained to his pillar, to get the chain removed—since “to a man that loves God, the heart is chain enough.”

As to the world: The French proverb has much that is true in it:—“On vaut ce qu'on veut valoir;”—one gets the standing he claims.

And, now, Farewell. The Eternal God seeks thee for Himself; be His alone—the Eternal Light, and Truth, and Love! May thy soul rise, by worthy aspirations and Christian graces, towards Him daily, and make even of the cares and trials of life, so many cloud-steps to that high temple where He shows Himself face to face.

THE END.

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